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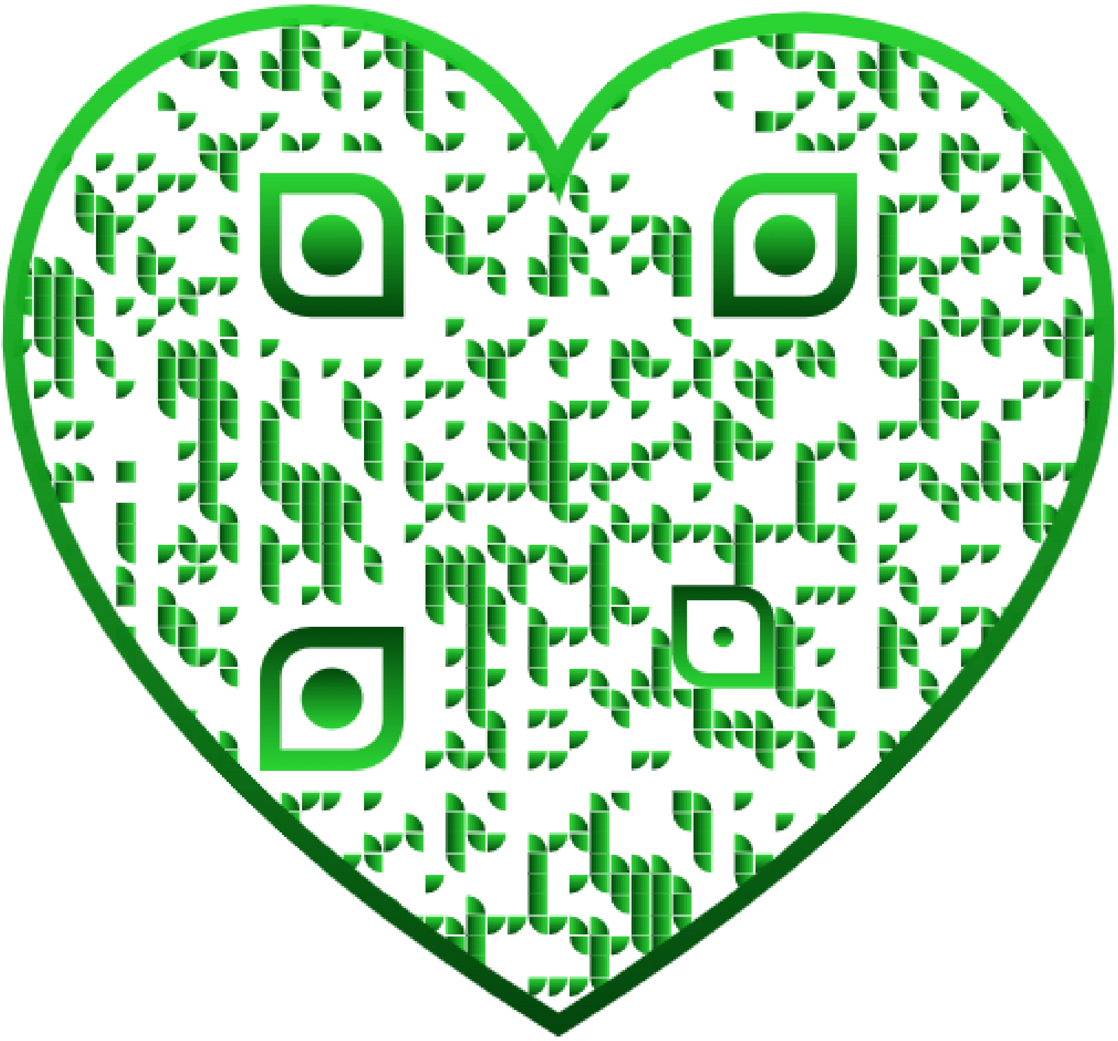
EMOTION AS AN UNSEEN OPPONENT

In elite chess, the greatest opponent may be the one within

TOURNAMENT REPORTS:

- **THE WORLD RAPID AND BLITZ TEAM CHESS CHAMPIONSHIPS**
- NORWAY CHESS: **DRAMA, DOMINANCE, AND THE RACE AGAINST TIME**



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THE WORLD RAPID AND BLITZ TEAM CHESS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2025

ONE OF THE STRONGEST CHESS EVENTS EVER HELD IN THE UK

From the 10th to 16th of June, London was the hub of the chess elite – with well over 100 Grandmasters and many other players of all levels – taking part in the World Rapid and Blitz Teams.

By Milan Dinic
Photo: Rafal Oleksiewicz/FIDE Official

Launched in Düsseldorf in 2023 and now in its third year (with the 2024 edition held in Astana, Kazakhstan), the event has grown in popularity, offering non-professionals and enthusiasts a unique opportunity to compete against elite players in a thrilling and high-stakes mixed format, featuring three days of rapid and two days of blitz chess.

The third edition of the event, with a total prize fund of 500,000 (£421,000) primarily provided by the Scheinberg Family (who also sponsor the Grand Swiss), saw MGD1 emerge as the dominant force in the Rapid tournament, while WR Chess clinched their second consecutive World Team Blitz Championship.

The tournament brought together 54 teams, including 116 Grandmasters, legendary figures, and rising stars - underscoring its growing prominence on the global chess calendar.

FIDE President Arkady Dvorkovich highlighted the event's role in promoting chess globally and building bridges among people, noting its growth since its inception in Düsseldorf in 2023 and Astana in 2024.

"A core part of our strategy has always been to forge a strong partnership between chess and the broader community - from the world of sports, business, or culture. Tournaments such as the World Rapid and Blitz Teams, alongside events such as the World Corporate Championship, are a shining example of this vision in action. And we will continue to work hard on having more of them," Dvorkovich said.

The President of the English Chess Federation, Dominic Lawson, also gave a speech. Reflecting on the historical connections of London (and Hammersmith in particular) to chess, Lawson also reminded the audience of the great Vera Menchik, the first Women's World Champion whose life was cut short during the German bombardment of London in 1944.

Packed and ready:
London's Novotel buzzes as the Rapid & Blitz Teams kicked off

MGD1 DOMINATES RAPID TOURNAMENT

The World Rapid Team Championship, a 12-round Swiss tournament, commenced on June 11. After three days of rigorous play, Team MGD1 from India (Erigaisi, Harikrishna, Anton Guijarro among others) secured the championship with a commanding performance, winning 10 of their 12 matches, drawing one, and losing one, accumulating 21 matchpoints.

A pivotal factor in MGD1's triumph was the consistent play of their amateur board player, Atharvaa P Tayade, who maintained a near-perfect record throughout the tournament, securing crucial wins for his team. In the decisive final round, Pranav V's victory over Ivan Šarić of Malcolm's Mates sealed MGD1's sole first-place finish.

Hexamind Chess Team, a new entrant in this year's competition featuring heavyweights Aronian, Giri, Dominguez Perez and Vidit, delivered a strong showing, finishing in sole second place with 20 matchpoints. They remained a formidable contender, trailing MGD1 by just one point through the final round. Freedom, featuring former World Champion Viswanathan Anand on board one, shared third place with Uzbekistan (led by Nodirbek Abdusattorov) and WR Chess, all on 17 matchpoints.

The Rapid segment also witnessed several early surprises, showcasing the excitement of these mixed events where amateurs and professionals can play against each other. In Round 1, GM Gawain Jones suffered an upset against a lower-rated opponent, Sumiya Bilguun of Mongolia-B. Round 2 saw Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, a former World Blitz Champion, lose to 16-year-old Turkish star Ediz Gürel, and Hikaru Nakamura drew swiftly with a 300-point lower-rated Yagiz Kaan Erdogmus.

WR CHESS RETAINS BLITZ CROWN IN GRIPPING KNOCKOUT STAGE

The FIDE World Blitz Teams Championship, introduced this year,

Scheinberg Family
ENGLISH CHESS FEDERATION
FIDE World Rapid and Blitz Team Championships 2025
FIDE

WR Chess, led by Ian Nepomniachtchi, Alireza Firouzja and Hikaru Nakamura on the podium, celebrating their second Blitz Crown

featured a two-phase structure: a round-robin group stage followed by knockouts. After 13 rounds of fast-paced action on June 14, 16 out of 53 teams advanced to the final playoff stage. The teams were divided into four pools, with the top four from each pool qualifying for the knockouts.

WR Chess, the reigning champions from the 2024 Blitz Championship (and the strongest team by rating, featuring elite players such as Nepomniachtchi, Nakamura, Firouzja, Duda, So, Hou Yifan and Kosteniuk), demonstrated their dominance by winning all their matches in Pool A, despite a narrow 3.5:2.5 victory against The MongolZ in Round 6. The late arrival of Ian Nepomniachtchi (due to visa issues) significantly bolstered WR Chess in the Blitz, and Jan-Krzysztof Duda emerged as a hero for the team, scoring 11.5 points out of 12 games.

A notable upset in the Blitz opening saw 13-year-old IM Ahmad Khagan (2290) from Turkish Airlines stun GM Hikaru Nakamura (2837) in Round 5, a victory Khagan solidified with a total of 9 wins out of 13 games against strong Grandmasters. From Pool B, Freedom, Hexamind, Theme International Trading, and Malcolm's Mates advanced to the knockout phase. Team Uzbekistan, with Nodirbek Yakubboev scoring 9.5 points out of 12, led Pool C, while Germany and Friends, Rookies, and Generation XYZA also qualified. In Pool D, Rapid champions MGD1 advanced alongside KazChess, Hetman GKS Katowice, and Barys.kz, with MGD1 winning all but one of their matches.

The knockout stage, held on June 15, brought heightened drama. All first-placed teams from the pools secured victories in the Round of 16. The quarter-finals, however, presented significant upsets. Germany and Friends initially defeated WR Chess 4:2, but the result was overturned after WR appealed, citing misinformation about the round's start time. The replayed match saw WR Chess triumph 4.5:1.5, securing their semi-final spot. Hexamind eliminated Rapid winners MGD1 with a 4:2 victory, with Anish Giri's win over Pentala Harikrishna proving decisive.

Rapid & Blitz Team Championships 2025
2025 FIDE WORLD RAPID & BLITZ TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS
Silence please:)

The Novotel Hotel in London became a hub for chess activity in mid-June

FIDE World Rapid & Blitz Team Championships 2025

Even the most serious players need a laugh: Levon Aronian (left) with Anish Giri (right)

Platon Panarin (9) was the youngest participant of the event in London. He played for Hexamind

Hikaru Nakamura defeated by 500 points lower-rated Ahmad Khagan (13)

In the semi-finals, WR Chess decisively defeated Hexamind 5.5:0.5 in the first match. Despite a strong push from Hexamind in the return match, which saw Aronian beat Nepomniachtchi, WR Chess held them to a 3:3 draw, securing their place in the final. KazChess defeated Uzbekistan 4:2 in their return semi-final duel, setting up the final clash with WR Chess.

The final saw WR Chess overcome KazChess in both matches, with identical 4:2 scores, securing their second consecutive Blitz title. Alireza Firouzja, Hikaru Nakamura, and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave delivered crucial wins in the final match against Rapport, Grischuk and Magshoodloo. Wadim Rosenstein, WR Chess Team owner and a key initiator of the event, expressed his satisfaction, stating the victory was "not just for the winners but for chess in general". Hexamind Chess Club claimed third place by defeating Uzbekistan 3.5:2.5 in both of their matches.

A GROWING POPULARITY OF CHESS IN THE UK AND GLOBALLY

The FIDE World Rapid and Blitz Team Championships in London was the second top world chess event held in the UK in under a year. Last October, the Global Chess League - featuring Magnus Carlsen and other crème de la crème of the chess world took place in Euston. The two events mark another step forward in FIDE's attempts to broaden chess's appeal and integrate it more deeply with the broader community.

The WRB Teams growing scale, increased prize fund, and inclusion of a Blitz tournament reflect its expanding global footprint. FIDE Deputy President Viswanathan Anand, speaking at the closing ceremony, reiterated FIDE's commitment to forging strong partnerships between chess and the worlds of sports, business, and culture, noting that events like these are "a shining example of this vision in action".

The tournament's success also highlighted the significant impact of young talent on the competitive landscape. While not a specific requirement, many teams incorporated rising stars. Nine-year-old Sarbartho Mani played for Freedom, and 10-year-old Roman Shogdzhiev for Rookies, underscoring a generational shift in elite chess. Other young talents making their mark included 16-year-old British GM Shreyas Royal, 13-year-old Nigerian champion Deborah Quickpen, and 10-year-old English Woman FIDE Master Bodhana Sivanandan.

The event was streamed live on FIDE's YouTube channel with commentary by GMs Daniel King and Jovanka Houska, providing accessible viewing for a global audience.

The London championships underscore the continued evolution of chess as a dynamic and increasingly accessible sport on the international stage

UK VISA HURDLES

Unfortunately, many of the players and staff working on the organisation of the event faced significant issues with getting a UK visa. Most notably, two-time world champion candidate and top world player Ian Nepomniachtchi had to miss the rapid tournament because his visa did not arrive on time, despite an express application with enough time before the event.

The same issue occurred for the Global Chess League, in October 2024. Given that many of the world's top players and sponsors come from countries which require visas, it would be helpful if there is more support and understanding in UK authorities. After all - these people want to come to the UK legally(!), using their own funds and spending them here, and - also - they are helping the struggling UK chess scene get more traction in the world.

Scheinberg
Family
Ian
Nepomniachtchi

Ian Nepomniachtchi almost didn't make it to London because of UK visa issues

We hope that someone will take note. Maybe even Rachel Reeves (who used to play chess) can see some economic value in making it easier for chess folk to visit Britain, as - after all - they also bring and spend money here (which we desperately need, given how strained the UK public finances are).

NOTE: BCM Editor Milan Dinic also served as the Press Officer at the WRB Teams in London

WHO IS **ISAI SCHEINBERG?**

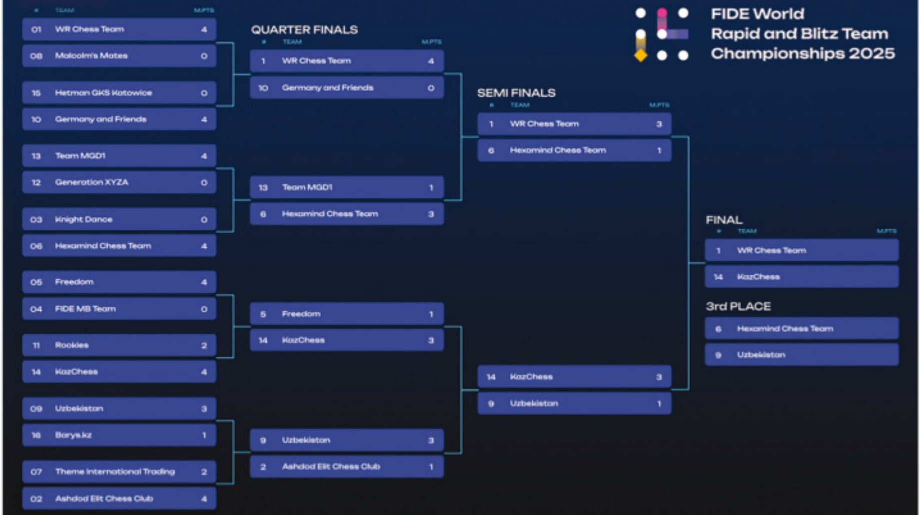
The event in London was sponsored by the Scheinberg Family organisation. The Scheinberg family is known for their prominent role in the online poker industry and their subsequent ventures in luxury hospitality and real estate. Most notably, Isai Scheinberg is the founder of Poker Stars, the biggest and most popular online platform for poker.

Born in 1946/47 in Vilnius (USSR, now Lithuania) Isai Scheinberg later emigrated to Israel, then to Canada, settling in Toronto after working for IBM. A mathematician, in 2001 he launched Poker Stars. Following legal issues with US tax authorities, Poker Stars were sold in 2014 to Amaya Gaming for $4.9 billion.

Event sponsor **Isai Scheinberg** (centre) with FIDE CEO **Emil Sutovsky** (left) and former world champion **Vishy Anand** (right)

Isai Scheinberg sponsored the Isle of Man chess event and has been the sponsor of the FIDE Grand Swiss since the events inception in 2019.

BLITZ KNOCKOUT STAGES



FIDE World
Rapid and Blitz Team
Championships 2025

#	TEAM	M.PTS
01	WR Chess Team	4
08	Malcolm's Mates	0
15	Hetman GKS Katowice	0
10	Germany and Friends	4
13	Team MGD1	4
12	Generation XYZA	0
03	Knight Dance	0
06	Hexamind Chess Team	4
05	Freedom	4
04	FIDE MB Team	0
11	Rookies	2
14	KazChess	4
09	Uzbekistan	3
16	Borys.kz	1
07	Theme International Trading	2
02	Ashdod Elit Chess Club	4

QUARTER FINALS

#	TEAM	M.PTS
1	WR Chess Team	4
10	Germany and Friends	0
13	Team MGD1	1
6	Hexamind Chess Team	3
5	Freedom	1
14	KazChess	3
9	Uzbekistan	3
2	Ashdod Elit Chess Club	1

SEMI FINALS

#	TEAM	M.PTS
1	WR Chess Team	3
6	Hexamind Chess Team	1
14	KazChess	3
9	Uzbekistan	1

FINAL

#	TEAM	M.PTS
1	WR Chess Team	
14	KazChess	

3rd PLACE

6	Hexamind Chess Team	
9	Uzbekistan	

FINAL STANDINGS - RAPID

#	TEAM MGD1	M. PTS	TB1	TB2
01	Team MGD1	21	616	45.5
02	Hexamind Chess Team	20	642	47
03	Freedom	17	636	46.5
04	Uzbekistan	17	614	45.5
05	WR Chess Team	17	593.5	44.5
06	Germany and Friends	16	548	39.5
07	Duobeniajan Costa Calida ESJ	15	489.5	44.5
08	Generation XZYA	15	482	43
09	Malcolm's Mates	14	570.5	40.5
10	Ashdod Elite Chess Club	14	545.5	40.5

EMOTION AS AN UNSEEN OPPONENT

Carlsen's moments of vulnerability remind us that chess, beneath its analytical surface, is deeply human

By GM Aleksandar Colovic; www.alexcolovic.com

Photo:

The eruption of emotions in chess is not a common thing. Chess players are usually taught to keep their emotions hidden, in order not to give away extra information to their opponents. However, being first and foremost humans, not all chess players are capable of hiding their emotions.

Recently, the media (even the general media) were all over Magnus Carlsen and his table banging after losing the game to Gukesh Dommaraju, in the 6th round of Norway Chess. Despite having a dominating position for much of the game, in time trouble, Carlsen blundered a piece and lost. In frustration, he punched the table so hard that pieces on the board toppled. He quickly composed himself (well, sort of), offering a handshake and later giving a shoulder pat to Gukesh when leaving the playing hall.

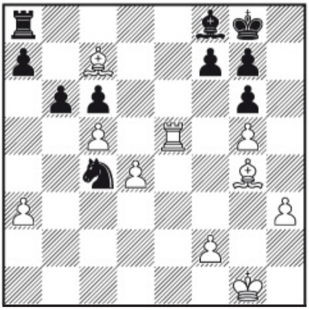
It's not unusual for Carlsen to show his emotions, especially when he is losing. But he isn't the first.

The most famous player not to be able to hide his emotions was Garry Kasparov. His grimaces and gesticulations have become legendary. Being a direct and emotional person, Kasparov was openly showing his disbelief, amazement, disgust and any other emotion he experienced at the moment.

But Kasparov could also deceive.

In 2002, at the super-tournament in Linares, in his game against Michael Adams, Kasparov embarked on a very curious exchange sacrifice. Upon playing it, he started shaking his head, seemingly expressing disbelief, or even disappointment at what he was seeing in front of him.

This was the position after 31.♘c4 in the game Kasparov-Adams in Linares, 2002.



32.d5!

32...♘xe5 33.♗xe5 cxd5 34.c6 f5 35.gxf6 gxf6 36.♗e6+ ♔g7 37.♗g3 ♗xa3 38.♗xd5 ♖c8 39.c7 ♗c5 40.♗b7 ♖xc7 41.♗xc7 And White is now winning.

41...a5 42.♗c6 g5 43.♔f1 ♔g6 44.f3 ♔h5 45.♗e8+ ♔h6 46.♔e2 f5 47.♗d8

1-0

I was in the audience, following the game. The exchange sacrifice seemed promising to me, so I couldn't connect the facial expressions with what was happening on the board.

Two moves later, Adams committed the decisive mistake, but Kasparov still didn't seem satisfied, still shaking his head. He won the game several moves later.

Upon returning to my room in the hotel Hanibal, where all the players of the super-tournament and the open were staying, I checked Kasparov's game. The evaluation after the exchange sacrifice was still even, and after Adams erred, Kasparov was winning. But he didn't show it; he still looked worried.

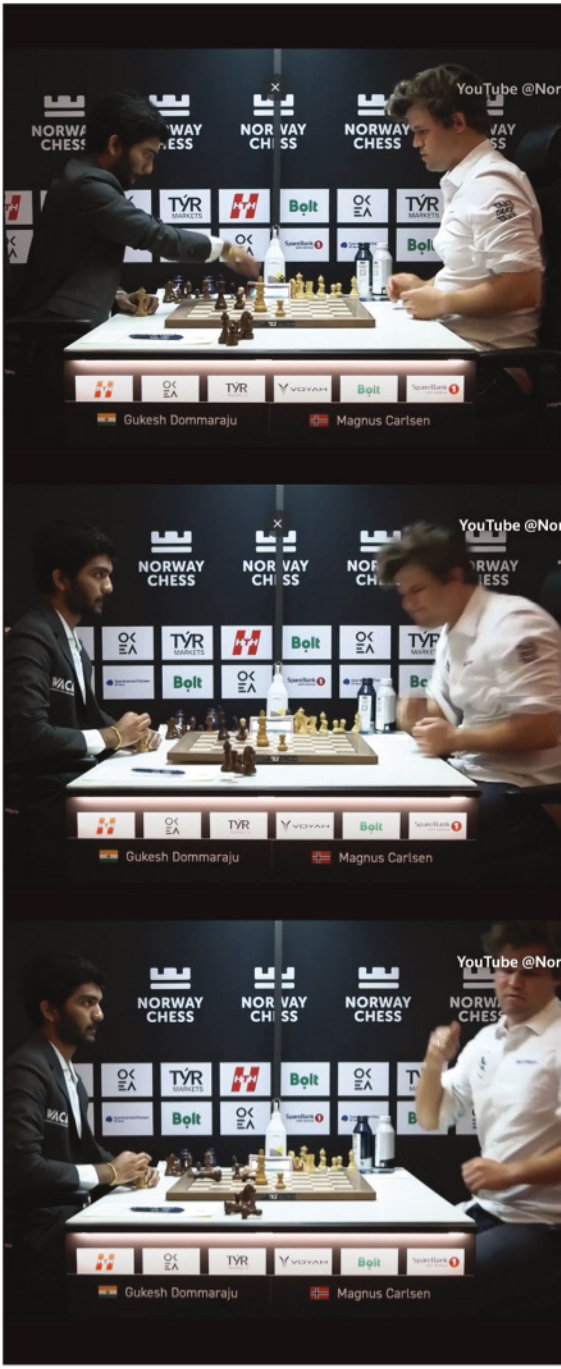
When two players sit at the board, they attune themselves even to the smallest facial reactions of the opponent. They learn to notice everything, even the breathing of the person sitting across the board. Anand famously said that he follows his opponent's emotional state by following his breathing.

Magnus Carlsen has usually been the ice-cold northern God at the chessboard. Few facial expressions to supplement the inevitable strangulation of the opponent. The world got used to it.

Therefore, it's not a surprise that the world is shocked whenever there is a deviation from that expected behaviour. And these deviations have started to occur on a more frequent basis in the past few years.

The smacking of the king in the middle of the board after winning the match with Hans Niemann was clearly a show of relief (as he said afterwards) and release of all the repressed negative energy that surrounds the duels of these two players. What happened in Norway against Gukesh, was something different.

Carlsen was the usual ice-cold northern God until disaster struck. He made the fatal mistake, played on for a while and when resigning, he smashed the board with full strength, the pieces fell, and he left abruptly. He quickly regained composure, patted Gukesh on the shoulder on his way out of the playing hall, but the scene was already



NORWAY CHESS
Gukesh Dommaraju
Magnus Carlsen

recorded and was making the rounds on social media.

Carlsen has been a number one player since Gukesh was four years old. He dominated for so long, but things and Carlsen are changing.

Elite chess demands relentless pressure. Over time, chronic exposure to high-stakes scenarios affects the nervous system. Recovery becomes more difficult; reactivity is harder to control. The fortress of composure can break. Nobody can be unaffected forever. This is particularly painful for those who are so used to winning, so not winning becomes a signal of a serious deviation from the norm, not something that can or should happen.

Carlsen married at the beginning of the year, he's expecting his first child. Priorities are changing for the dominant champion. Chess is still very important, but some things are becoming more important.

This shift of priorities was already on show when Carlsen announced that he didn't want to work on theory anymore, preferring Fischer Random. There, he can rely just on his talent. Just play golf during the day, come at the board, play chess and keep winning.

It's a smart way of extending his domination by changing the game because he no longer had the patience to sit for hours and seek new opening ideas. But nobody can run away from their nervous system, so how long before Carlsen smashes a board in a Fischer Random event?

Carlsen's moments of vulnerability remind us that chess, beneath its analytical surface, is deeply human.

Ultimately, the unseen opponent every player faces is not the one sitting across the board - it is within themselves, where triumph, tension and despair constantly collide. Even the Gods of chess must eventually confront their own humanity.

DRAMA, DOMINANCE, AND THE RACE AGAINST TIME

By GM Aleksandar Colovic

Photo: Michal Walusza/Norway Chess Official

Magnus Carlsen emerged victorious at the Norway Chess 2025 tournament in Stavanger, but his path to victory was anything but straightforward.

A compelling blend of dominance and vulnerability marked the event, which featured an unusual imbalance favouring White and was heavily influenced by an unforgiving time control. Amidst tense battles and dramatic reversals, Carlsen's triumph underscored the narrowing margins at the elite level, prompting fresh questions about his continued supremacy and the future of classical chess itself.

The Norway Chess double-round robin tournament (26 May - 6 June) was perhaps the most-eagerly awaited classical event in a very long time.

Its format, a double-round robin that included the top five players in the world, featuring the World Champion, was reminiscent of the famous tournament in Las Palmas in 1996, whose field was comprised of Kasparov, Karpov, Anand, Kramnik, Topalov and Ivanchuk.

Such events serve as a "Hamburg score" in the chess world - a Soviet-time chess slang that means "who beats whom when the best players meet and it matters the most."

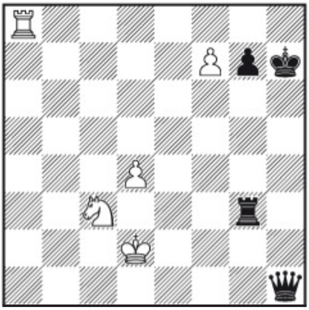
The tournament couldn't have come at a better time, aiming to answer questions like: is Carlsen still king of classical, or has his fire faded; can the new World Champion Gukesh dominate the elite; will Erigaisi keep rising; can Caruana catch fire like in St. Louis; does Nakamura still have the edge?

At the end of the event, we got our answers, but we also have some lingering questions as well.

Carlsen won the event, but the score doesn't reflect the domination he would have liked to demonstrate. Everything was going well for the world's number one until the fateful round six: he started by beating the World Champion Gukesh in round one, a balanced game that was decided in time-trouble when Gukesh didn't have enough time to calculate the precise and only way to give perpetual check.

Magnus **Carlsen – Gukesh** D

13th Norway Chess 2025 Stavanger NOR (1.3)



46.f8♕ Carlsen promoted and threatens ♕h8, but it's black's move and he has a narrow path to a perpetual check. Playing on mere increment time of 10-seconds per move, Gukesh wasn't able to find it.

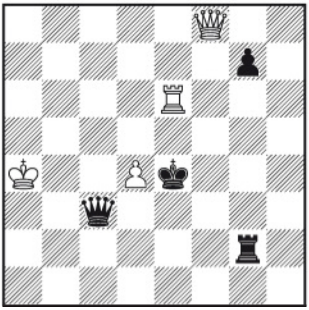
46...♕h6+? After this mistake White manages to hide from the checks and win the game.

46...♖g2+! was the only way. After Or 47.♔d3 (47.♘e2 ♕h6+ works. For example: 48.♔d3 ♕h3+ 49.♔d2 it's the only move not to lose, repeating the position. (49.♔c4?? even loses after 49...♕e6+ 50.♔b4 ♖xe2 as Black's centralised queen successfully defends against a possible white attack.)) 47...♖g3+! again the only move. 48.♔c2 (48.♔c4? ♕c6+ 49.♕c5 ♕xa8 wins for Black.) 48...♕g2+ 49.♔b3 ♕b7+ 50.♔a4 ♖xc3 and compared to the game Black doesn't get mated. This is extremely complicated, so the players cannot be blamed for not finding such intricacies, especially with no time left on the clock.

47.♔c2 ♕g6+ 48.♔b2 ♕b6+ 49.♔a2 ♖g2+ 49...♖xc3 50.♕f5+ ♕g6 51.♖h8+ wins the queen.

50.♔a3 ♕b2+ 51.♔a4 ♕xc3 Black regained the pieces, but now it's White's turn to start the attack.

52.♕h8+ ♔g6 53.♖a6+ ♔f5 54.♕f8+ ♔e4 55.♖e6+.



Black resigned as he's mated soon.

55.♖e6+ ♔xd4 (55...♔d3 56.♕f3+ ♔c4 57.♖c6+) 56.♕d6+ ♔c4 57.♖e4+ ♕d4 58.♕xd4#

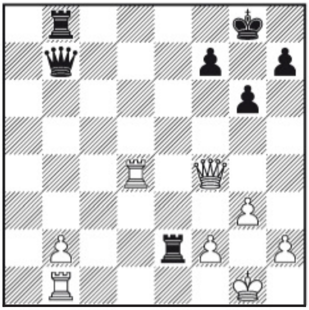
1-0

> THE TOURNAMENT COULDN'T HAVE COME AT A BETTER TIME, AIMING TO ANSWER QUESTIONS SUCH AS:
> IS CARLSEN STILL KING OF CLASSICAL, OR HAS HIS FIRE FADED;
> CAN THE NEW WORLD CHAMPION GUKESH DOMINATE THE ELITE;
> WILL ERIGAISI KEEP RISING;
> CAN CARUANA CATCH FIRE LIKE IN ST. LOUIS;
> DOES NAKAMURA STILL HAVE THE EDGE?

This was followed by a win in round four when Erigaisi showed that he's not quite there (meaning World-Championship material) yet when he misevaluated an exchange of rooks and ended up in a lost position.

Magnus **Carlsen** – Arjun **Erigaisi**

13th Norway Chess 2025 Stavanger NOR (4.1)



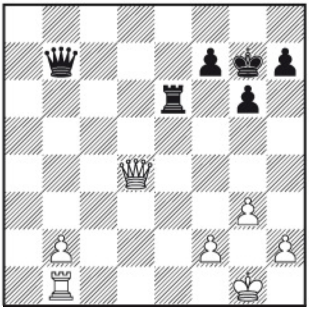
30.♕f6 White indirectly defends the extra pawn on b2 since there is a threat of ♖d8. Now Black needs to decide how to defend.

30...♖e6? The wrong exchange. Black should have kept the rooks and aimed to exchange the queens.

30...♕e7! was better. Now the pawn on b2 is under attack and the double-rook endgame after 31.♕xe7 ♖xe7 32.b4 ♖b5 should be a relatively easy draw. Kasparov drew a similar endgame against Karpov in the 19th game of the match in Seville in 1987;

30...h5 is the engine's way, introducing ...h4 ideas. 31.b4 ♖be8 now Black threatens mate. 32.♖d8 ♖xd8 33.♕xd8+ ♔h7 and with ideas like ...♕f3, ...♖e4, ...h4, Black has enough counterplay to fight the threat of the advance of the b-pawn.

31.♖d8+! ♖xd8 32.♕xd8+ ♔g7 33.♕d4+!



Centralising the queen on the ideal square - it defends the pawn on f2 and supports the advance of the b-pawn.

33...♔g8 34.b4 White is winning now, known from the famous last game of the match between Alekhine and Capablanca (in that game White had an a-pawn, but this makes no difference).

34...h5 35.b5 ♖b6 36.♖e1 The winning method consists of combining the threats against the black king with the threat to advance with the b-pawn. Black blockaded the b-pawn, so White shifts his attention to the black king, threatening mate with ♖e8.

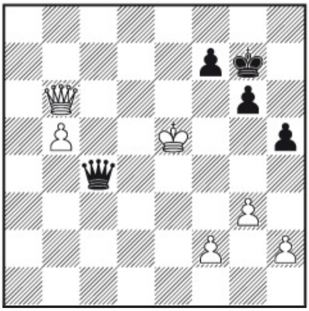
36...♕b8 37.♖e8+ Carlsen transposes to a winning queen endgame.

37.♕d7 ♔g7 38.♖e8 ♕d6 39.♕xd6 ♖xd6 40.♖e1 with ♖b1 next would have been a winning rook endgame, again similar to the Alekhine-Capablanca game.

37...♕xe8 38.♕xb6 ♕e1+ 38...h4 39.gxh4 eliminates the danger against the white king. Then White will follow the same plan as in the game.

39.♔g2 ♕e4+ 40.♔f1 ♕d3+ 41.♔e1 The king walks towards the passed pawn.

41...♕c3+ 42.♔e2 ♕c2+ 43.♔e3 ♕c3+ 44.♔e4 ♕c4+ 45.♔e5 ♔g7



45...♕e2+ 46.♔d6 only helps White.

46.h4 Carlsen takes time to improve the kingside - now all the pawns are protected.

46...♕d3 Black stops ♔d6, but now the pawn will advance.

46...♔g8 47.♔d6

47.♕c5 Threatening b6.

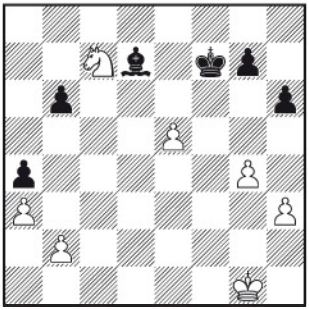
47...♕f5+ 48.♔d6 The king joins the queen and the b-pawn, which will make it easy for White to advance it to the b8-square.

1-0

This was followed by a near-loss against Caruana, when the American didn't find the decisive regrouping in the endgame.

Fabiano **Caruana** - Magnus **Carlsen**

13th Norway Chess 2025 Stavanger NOR (5.3)



43.♔f2 White is a pawn up, but Black can hope to neutralise it thanks to his centralised pieces. However, in this position there is only one move that ensures the draw.

43...g5? It's natural to fix White's kingside structure on light squares, but this allows White to centralise the king and transfer the knight back to its own camp. Needless to say the mistake came after move 40, by which time the players had more or less spent their allotted two hours and were playing mostly on increment time of 10 seconds per move.

43...♗c6! was essential, stopping ♘d5. Now after 44.♔e3 ♗g2! 45.h4 g5! This is the key - it's important to fix White's g4-pawn. 46.hxg5 hxg5 47.♔d4 ♗f3 Black wins the pawn on g4 and obtains a passed pawn on his own.

44.♘d5? Caruana rushes and misses a golden opportunity.

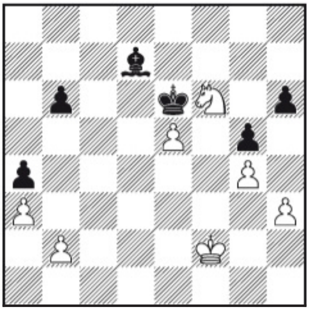
44.♔e3! ♗c6 45.♔d4 ♗g2 46.♘d5 ♗xh3 47.♘e3! is the whole difference - the pawn on g4 is safely defended now and White threatens ♔d5. White wins after 47...h5 (or 47...♔e6 48.♔e4 with a zugzwang after 48...b5 49.♔d4) 48.gxh5 ♗e6 49.♘d5 g4 50.♘f4 and the two

Carlsen is still the best, but the margins are getting narrower

passed pawns should decide the game - together with the knight they create a barrier for the black king, which cannot cross the sixth rank, giving White time to play ♔e3-f2-g3-h4-g5 or to round up the pawn on g4.

44...♔e6 Now the game is drawn.

45.♘f6



Going after the pawn on h6, but it doesn't make a difference.

45.♘xb6 ♗c6 with ...♔xe5 next is similar.

45...♗c8 46.♘g8 ♔xe5 47.♘xh6 ♗e6 Now the knight is dominated.

48.♔e3 b5 49.♘f5 The pawn endgame is an easy draw.

49...♗xf5 50.gxf5 ♔xf5 51.♔f3 ♔f6 52.♔g4 ♔g6 And the game was drawn in 67 moves when the last pawns left the board.

½-½

Then came the fateful round six, the start of the second half of the tournament. Facing Gukesh with the black pieces Carlsen displayed his best qualities and outplayed the young Champion. The game was nearing its logical outcome, another Carlsen victory, when the time-control, favoured by Carlsen, struck again.

Gukesh D - Magnus **Carlsen**

13th Norway Chess 2025 Stavanger NOR (6.3)

1.e4 e5 It’s notable that in this important tournament Carlsen was using his best openings, relying on his World Championship preparation, playing the Catalan and 1.c4 with White, and 1.e4 e5 with Black.

2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6 Carlsen hasn’t played the Berlin very often lately, preferring the more active Marshall Gambit, but it used to be his main weapon in his matches with Anand. Here he perhaps tried to surprise Gukesh a little.

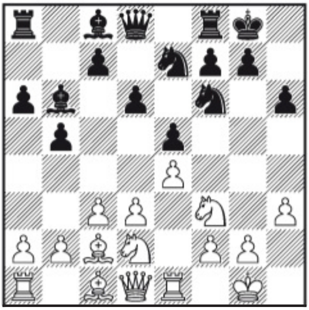
4.d3 No endgames.

4...♗c5 5.c3 0-0 6.0-0 d6 This move was the usual one when Kramnik was still active, then everybody started playing 6...d5, and now again there is a swing towards this move.

7.h3 White has many moves at his disposal here.

7...a6 8.♗a4 h6 Stopping ♗g5 is useful. Carlsen likes to play this move with White, so perhaps doesn’t quite like it to face it with Black.

9.♖e1 b5 10.♗c2 ♗b6 11.♘bd2 ♘e7



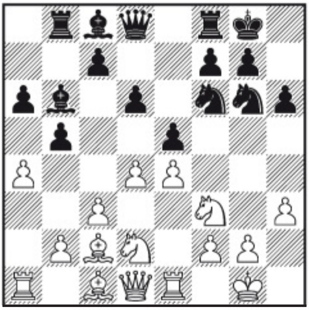
The standard knight maneuver is executed without spending a tempo on the move 11...♖e8, which is the main move here.

12.a4 ♖b8 Carlsen’s preferred reaction to the move a4 - he used it on more than one occasion in his match with Nepomniachtchi, albeit in the Anti-Marshall positions.

12...♗b7 is the other move to defend the pawn on b5. 13.♘h4 stops ...♘g6. 13...c5 14.♘f1 with a typical Ruy Lopez battle.

13.d4 Gukesh uses the fact that the knight is no longer on c6 and advances in the centre.

13...♘g6



Carlsen decides to keep the pawn on e5.

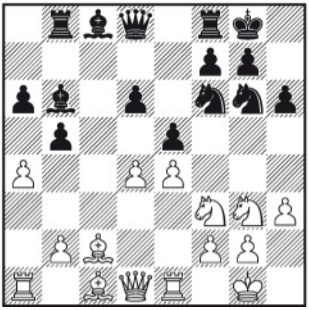
13...exd4 14.cxd4 c5 was another standard reaction. After 15.♘f1 (15.d5 ♘g6 16.b3 ♘d7 with a structure that usually arises from the Zaitsev Variation, the main difference being the placement of the black bishop on b6.) 15...cxd4 16.axb5 axb5 17.♘xd4 ♕c7 with a balanced middlegame, the pawn on b5 being defended indirectly thanks to 18.♘xb5?! ♗xf2+ 19.♔xf2 ♖xb5.

14.♘f1 The engine prefers to close the queenside first with 14.a5!? ♗a7 and then play 15.♘f1 claiming that White is somewhat better. After 15...c5 16.♘g3 cxd4 17.cxd4 Black cannot open the b-file with ...bxa4 like in the game. Still, after 17...♖e8 18.♗e3 ♖b7 Black has a solid position.

A commendable performance by the World Champion, finishing in third place

14...c5 The usual way for Black to attack White's centre. Now a5 is no longer possible because the queen also controls that square.

15.♘g3 cxd4 16.cxd4



16...bxa4! An important move that ensures that Black obtains enough counterplay on the queenside.

17.♗xa4 ♗b7 18.d5 White gains space, but Black doesn't have bad pieces (if we compare to the usual Ruy Lopez positions where the queenside is closed and Black is stuck with passive bishops). Even more so, after his next move, Black stakes his claim on some initiative on the queenside.

18.♖a3 with the idea of ♖c3 was an alternative. Black can play in different ways now, for example 18...d5!? (or the calmer 18...exd4 19.♘xd4 ♗c5 20.♖d3 ♕b6 with a complex middlegame.) 19.♘xe5 dxe4 with unclear play.

18...a5! Stopping b4 and having the ...♗a6 idea at his disposal. The engine already gives a slight preference to Black.

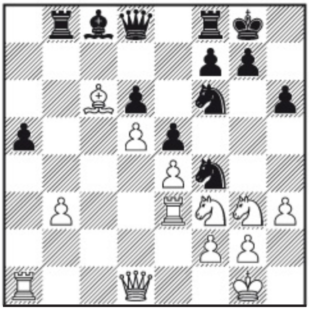
19.♗e3 The bishop on b6 is very strong, so Gukesh wants to exchange it.

19...♗c8 Carlsen is careful, keeping an eye on the f5-square, though the knight jump ♘f5 isn't very dangerous if other pieces cannot support it.

19...♗a6 was also possible.

20.b3 ♗xe3 21.♖xe3 ♘f4 We can observe the difference in the bishop activity - the white one on a4 is pretty useless, while the one on c8 controls the f5-square, targets the h3-pawn and can also make use of the f1-a6 diagonal.

22.♗c6?!



This looks good, placing a piece on an outpost, but the bishop continues to be misplaced. The queenside is almost empty and it has nothing to do on c6.

22.♖c1 was a more circumspect way of arranging the pieces. After 22...♖b4 23.♘d2 h5 24.♘e2 clearly places White on the defensive, but he manages to control Black's initiative and obtains a balanced position.

22...♖b4 23.♕c2?! Another imprecise move that increases Black's advantage.

23.♘d2 was a better way to regroup After 23...h5 24.♘e2 g5 Black has an obviously more active position, but White is still very solid, for example 25.♘xf4 gxf4 26.♖c3 and Black cannot realistically create much on the kingside.

23...g6 Covering the f5-square and preparing ...h5, ...♔g7 in the future. This choice is more strategically clear than the alternative.

23...♗xh3!? was possible and quite good, too. After 24.gxh3 ♘xh3+ 25.♔g2 ♘f4+ 26.♔g1 ♘g4 27.♖c3 g6 Black has more than enough compensation, again thanks to the fact that the bishop on c6 is out of the game.

24.♔h1?! White avoids possible checks from h3 (after a sacrifice like ...♗xh3), but it's still rather vague.

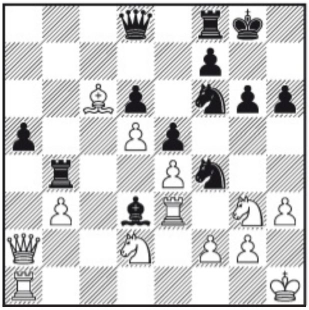
24.♘e2 challenging the knight on f4 was better. Now after 24...♗xh3!? White has 25.♘xe5! (25.gxh3? ♘xh3+ 26.♔g2 ♘xf2! destroys White's kingside - Black's three pawns are worth more than the bishop on c6. 27.♔xf2? ♘g4+ wins the rook on e3.) 25...♘xe2+ 26.♕xe2 dxe5 27.♖xh3 ♖xe4 28.♖e3 and White has compensation for the pawn - the d5-pawn is now a passed one and there is attack on the a5-pawn.

24...♗a6 With no more threats like ...♗h3, Carlsen activates the bishop along the other diagonal.

25.♕a2? Gukesh seeks counterplay against the pawn on a5, but clouds are gathering on the other wing...

25.♔h2 waiting is the engine's preference, though that's just impossible for a human. After 25...♔g7 26.♕a2 works better, as after 26...♗d3 27.♕xa5 ♕xa5 28.♖xa5 ♖xb3 29.♘e1 White somehow stays in the game thanks to the fact that after 29...♖fb8 the knight is not pinned and White can play 30.f3 stabilising the e4-pawn.

25...♗d3! 26.♘d2



Now 26.♕xa5 loses to 26...♕xa5 27.♖xa5 ♖xb3 28.♘e1 ♖fb8 29.f3 ♖b1 and the knight is pinned, so after 30.♔h2 ♖8b2 Black's attack is decisive.

26...h5 Intending ...h4, when the pawn on e4 would fall.

27.♕xa5 The endgame won't bring much respite.

27...♕xa5 28.♖xa5 h4 29.♖a4 ♖fb8 30.♖a2 White keeps the knight on g3 with a tactical trick, but that doesn't change anything.

30.♘gf1 ♗xf1 31.♘xf1 ♖xb3 32.♖xb3 ♖xb3 is hopeless for White - again thanks to that hapless bishop on c6.

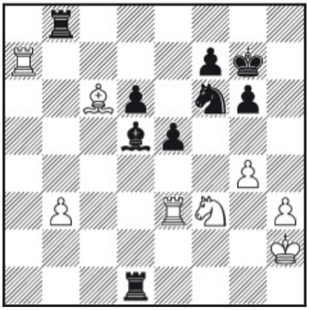
30...♔g7 It was possible to take the knight with 30...hxg3 31.fxg3 and here several moves are good, for example 31...♘e2 probably being the best as it wins material after (31...♘xh3 32.gxh3 ♗xe4+ 33.♘xe4 ♘xe4 is also winning for Black.) 32.♖xd3 ♘c1.

31.♖a7 ♖d4 Defending the bishop on d3 and threatening to take the knight on g3.

32.♘f3 hxg3 33.fxg3 White will regain the piece, but the weaknesses of all the pawns will remain.

33...♘xh3 33...♗xe4 was another good alternative.

34.gxh3 ♗xe4 35.♔h2 ♖d1 36.g4 ♗xd5



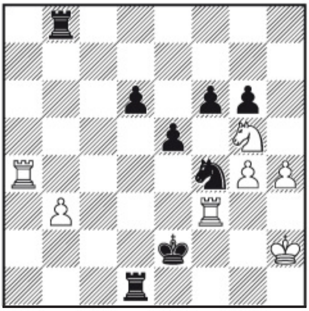
Finally winning a pawn, though it felt as if Black was up in material all the time! However, while leading to a totally lost position, this exchange brings something good for White - the hopeless bishop on c6 is exchanged!

37.♗xd5 ♘xd5 38.♖e2 ♘f4 39.♖c2 ♔f6 40.h4 ♔e6 Carlsen centralised the king and has a winning position. Under normal circumstances, he would win this position 100 times out of 100. But in Norway, with only 10 seconds increment per move and with Gukesh in severe time trouble playing solely on increment, Carlsen's conversion machine stalled...

41.♘g5+ ♔d5 42.♖a5+ ♔d4 43.♖a4+ ♔d3 44.♖f2 f6? Imprecise, though we shouldn't judge the players too much. Carlsen had some minutes left in addition to the increment time, but soon enough he was also playing practically a bullet game.

44...f5 was good, keeping control of the e4-square.

45.♖f3+ ♔e2

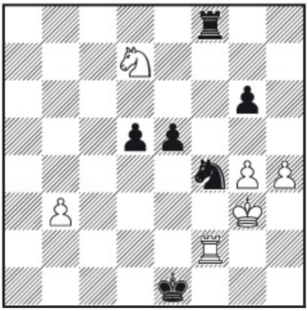


46.♖a2+? 46.♖e4+ ♔d2 47.♖a4! is an amazing resource, the point being that 47...fxg5 (47...♔c2 is a winning attempt, but after 48.♘e4 White isn't even worse!) 48.♖a2+! ♔c1 49.♖ff2 leads to a perpetual check along the second rank!

46...♖d2 47.♖xd2+ ♔xd2 48.♘e4+ ♔e2 49.♔g3 White improved his position, his pieces are concentrated and now he shouldn't lose.

49...d5 Carlsen gives back the pawn in order to push his passed d-pawn.

50.♘xf6 ♖f8 51.♖f2+ ♔e1 52.♘d7



This isn't even a trap, but it led to the most dramatic moment of the tournament...

52.g5 was better, keeping the knight on the strong outpost on f6. Unlike the bishop on c6, the knight controls Black's passed pawns and if necessary can create counterplay by supporting the h5-break. 52...♘h5+ 53.♔g2 ♘xf6 54.♖xf6 ♖g8 55.♖d6 should be drawn - Black's pieces are too scattered and the pawns are subject to an attack.

52...♘e2+?? Carlsen hallucinates. He didn't have the time to see that White can stop the passed pawns.

52...♖e8 53.♖xf4!? (53.♘f6 would have likely led to a repetition.) 53...exf4+ 54.♔xf4 should also draw for White - the king on e1 is too far away.

53.♖xe2+! ♔xe2 54.♘xf8 d4 55.♘e6 d3 56.♘c5 The knight is just in time. Unlike their first game, where he was also playing on increment time, this time Gukesh could calculate the correct way.

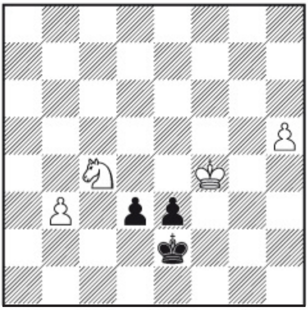
56...♔e3 56...d2 57.♘e4 d1♘ (57...d1♕ 58.♘c3+ ♔d2 59.♘xd1 ♔xd1 60.♔f3 is an elementary win.) 58.b4 wins for White, who will create another passed pawn after h5.

57.♘a4! The only move, but it suffices.

57...e4 57...d2 58.♘b2

58.h5 gxh5 59.gxh5 ♔d2 60.♘b2 e3 60...♔c2 61.♘c4.

61.♘c4+ ♔e2 62.♔f4



The simplest - White wins the pawn on e3 and stops the d-pawn. Carlsen banged the table in disgust and left abruptly, filled with the disappointment of losing a well-played game, so well-known to the rest of the world.

1-0

WHAT IF...

In one "what if" scenario, it's worth noting that if Carlsen had won this game and the rest of his scores remained the same, he would have surpassed Kasparov's score in Las Palmas by half a point (Kasparov won with 6.5/10, a point ahead of Anand), achieving a one-and-a-half-point margin over second place, which would certainly have given him the satisfaction he sought - high-quality play with confirmed dominance over the world's elite.

The fact that he didn't manage it and his reaction to the loss are an indication that Carlsen is no longer the same - his nervous system is no longer as impervious as before and while he still cares and wants to win, he understands that it's becoming harder and the unwillingness to work as hard on chess (after his decision to abandon the World Championship cycle after the match with Nepomniachtchi) is slowly catching up with him.

Carlsen is still the best, but the margins are getting narrower. It is not for nothing that he's limited his play in classical events to the minimum, something Kasparov did in his final years - he plays just enough to keep the high rating and formally be number one in the world, but the world understands that more frequent play as before would lead to his losing that comfortable rating cushion. I expect Carlsen to repeat what Kasparov did - win a major event (Linares 2005 in Kasparov's case) and retire from classical chess while still being number one. It was possible to do so after winning in Norway, but he passed on that opportunity. We will see when/if he gets another one.

THE TIME CONTROL FACTOR

The time control in Norway was the same as last year. The players started with the "good old" two hours at the beginning, with no increment time. This gave them a feeling of "enough time" but only until move 40, because then enough time immediately became no time - there was no added time after move 40, only increment time of 10 seconds per move. The players were forced to switch from the "slow" classical in the 90s to a practical blitz, unless they left themselves some time from the initial 120 minutes. The switch wasn't easy - Gukesh and Caruana, players who like to think suffered in the beginning, but managed to improve their time management in the second half of the event.

Carlsen said he liked the time control, as it forces the players to manage their time better. While this is true, the abrupt switch from classical to blitz (not even rapid, not even 30 seconds per move!) with no additional time meant that the players were also forced to change their playing rhythm, from the slowly-paced classical part to the insanely hectic blitz-mode.

Needless to say, this is very hard and it was one of the main reasons for so many decisive games and the irregular statistic of White scoring significantly better than Black.

THE STATISTICAL ANOMALY

In Norway, White won 13 games and Black won two, with 15 drawn games. This is not normal, especially at top levels, where Black is supposed to hold more easily thanks to the very advanced opening preparation of these players. The statistical anomaly is due to the fact that the pressure White usually applies from the start, however minuscule, persisted long enough—thanks to the mastery of the players—to reach a phase of the game where both sides were left with little time. Under such severe conditions, the players inevitably committed mistakes, leading to the above statistic.

To prove the point, two of the games above by Carlsen should have been drawn, but both Gukesh and Carlsen himself committed blunders with little time left. Sometimes the blunders were mutual, like in the game Caruana-Carlsen, where first Carlsen missed the draw and then Caruana missed the win.

> IN NORWAY, WHITE WON 13 GAMES AND BLACK WON TWO, WITH 15 DRAWN GAMES. THIS IS NOT NORMAL, ESPECIALLY AT TOP LEVELS, WHERE BLACK IS SUPPOSED TO HOLD MORE EASILY THANKS TO THE VERY ADVANCED OPENING PREPARATION OF THESE PLAYERS

NORWAY CHESS
TYR MARKETS
Bolt
SpareBank 1
VOYAH

Carlsen and his old nemesis, Fabiano Caruana

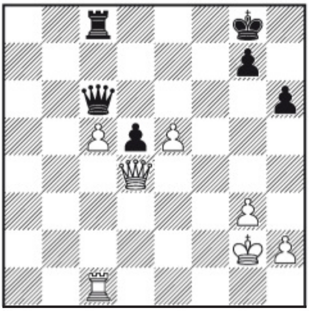
The rating performances of Carlsen and Gukesh show the same picture. Just compare: Carlsen's rating performance with the white pieces was 3022, winning three games and drawing two, while Gukesh's was 3157, winning four and drawing one.

In Gukesh's case, it's a stark difference with his performance rating with the black pieces - it was quite the opposite, drawing one and losing four, for a score of mere 2425. These two combined for an overall rating performance of 2792, winning one rating point in the process.

This pattern of white domination as a result of black committing the last mistake was omnipresent. Take a look at Carlsen's win over Caruana in the penultimate round, the one that secured him the title.

Magnus **Carlsen – Fabiano Caruana**

13th Norway Chess 2025 Stavanger NOR (9.3)



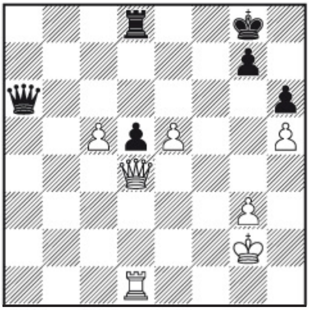
37.h4 The position is practically a fortress for Black since White's pawns on e5 and c5 are too vulnerable and cannot advance forward.

37...♔h8 38.♖c2 ♔g8 Black just waits.

39.h5 ♔h8 40.♔h3 ♔g8 41.♔h2 ♕e6 Caruana changes the stance. Now White pins Black down to the defence of the d5-pawn, but the deadlock remains.

There was nothing wrong with 41...♔h8

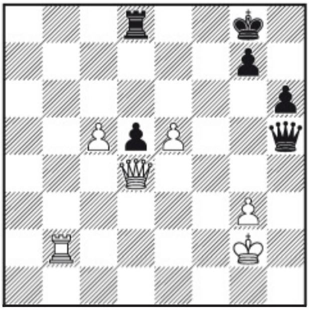
42.♖d2 ♖d8 43.♔g2 ♕c6 44.♖d1 ♕a6



Both players shuffle, but don't forget that they had little time left by this point...

45.♖e1 ♕e6 46.♖b1 Giving the impression that he wants to activate the rook on the b-file and setting up a nice trap...

46...♕f5 47.♖b2 ♕xh5??



And Caruana abandons the fortress and falls into it! There is no way this would have happened had Caruana had a little more time on the clock...

47...♕e6 would have continued the shuffling, as 48.♖b6 ♕f5 threatens checks from c2 and if ♔h3 and ...♕f5, repeating the position.

48.c6! Now the pawns move forward and White wins.

48...♔h7 49.e6 ♕g6 50.♖e2 ♖a8 51.♕xd5 ♖a3 52.♕e4 Exchanging queens, after which the pawns will promote.

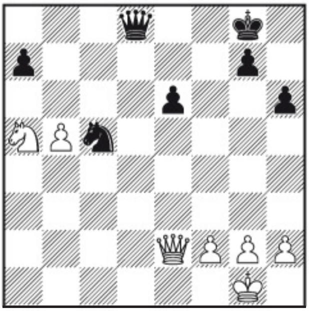
52.♕e4 ♖xg3+ 53.♔f1 ♖g1+ 54.♔f2 ♕xe4 55.♖xe4 ♖c1 56.e7 is a sample line.

1-0

Gukesh had a topsy-turvy event, not only with the results, but also during his games. He started with two losses, the aforementioned one against Carlsen and then another one to Erigaisi. Then in round three he beat Nakamura from a position that otherwise should have been a draw.

Gukesh D – Hikaru **Nakamura**

13th Norway Chess 2025 Stavanger NOR (3.3)

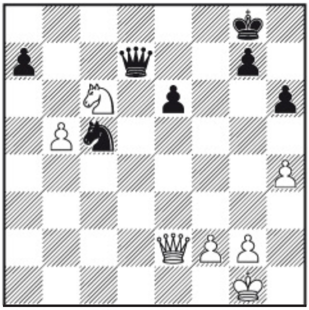


30.♘c6 White still has some initiative, but Black should be able to draw, especially if the pawns on the queenside are exchanged. We have seen Nakamura save much more horrible positions than this one.

30...♕d7?! The first imprecision and a tame move by Nakamura, passively defending the a7-pawn.

30...♕b6! was the cleanest. The queen keeps an eye on the pawn on b5 and the knight on c6, thus limiting the mobility of the white queen. After 31.h4 a5! (31...a6? loses to a beautiful combination after 32.♘e7+ ♔f7 33.♘c8! ♕c7 34.bxa6!! ♕xc8 35.♕f3+ ♔g8 36.a7 and the pawn cannot be stopped: 36...♘b7 37.♕f4 with ♕b8 next.) 32.♕f3 ♕b7 the queen controls the e7-square and the a4-pawn gives Black counterplay.

31.h4



31...♕d6? This must have been based on a miscalculation as otherwise there is no explanation why Nakamura just gave up the pawn on a7, the one he just defended with his previous move.

31...♘a4! was necessary, but things were already tricky for Black. After 32.♕e5 ♘b6 33.♕b8+ ♔h7 34.♕xa7 White won the pawn on a7, but Black manages to muster counterplay after 34...♕d1+ 35.♔h2 ♕d6+ 36.g3 ♕c5 with a double attack on the pawns on f2 and b5.

32.♘xa7 White is winning now as Black has nothing to show for the pawn.

32...♘d3 32...♕f4 33.g3 achieves nothing.

33.♘c6 ♔h8 34.♕f3 ♔g8 Clearly showing that he has nothing.

35.g3 ♘c5 36.♔g2 ♕d7 37.♕f4 ♕d5+ 38.♔h2 ♔h7 39.♕f7 Threatening ♘e7.

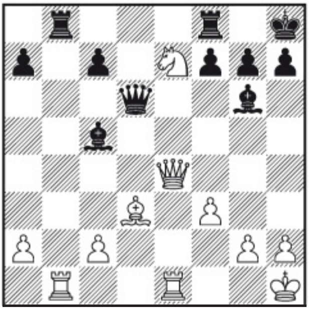
39...♘d3 40.♘e7 ♕d8 41.♕xe6 ♘xf2 42.♕f5+ White wins a piece after 42.♕f5+ ♔h8 43.♘g6+ ♔h7 44.♘e5+ ♔g8 45.♕xf2.

1-0

He was lost, but saved the game against Wei Yi in round five, he was lost, but this time won against Carlsen in round six, as we saw above, repeating the same feat against Erigaisi in round seven. Then he inexplicably misevaluated what seemed to be a dead-drawn position against Nakamura.

Hikaru **Nakamura – Gukesh** D

13th Norway Chess 2025 Stavanger NOR (8.3)



20.♘xg6+ Nakamura played a line that is known to lead to a draw and it appears that it isn't far ahead. Black needs to make a choice now how to recapture the knight.

20...fxg6?? Strategically speaking, a losing move. It's hard to say what Gukesh missed as White's plan is simple enough now.

20...hxg6 was the correct recapture. After 21.♖xb8 ♖xb8 22.g3 ♔g8 23.♔g2 ♔f8 Black successfully evacuates and secures his kingside. Even if Gukesh missed this, simply by comparing this and the game continuation would have led him to choose this path.

21.♖xb8 ♖xb8 22.g3 White's plan is to push the h-pawn to h5 using the control on the b1-h7 diagonal. It will lead to a decisive weakening of Black's kingside.

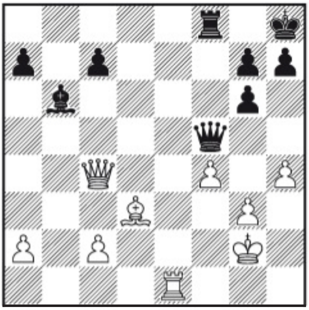
NORWAY CHESS
TYR MARKETS

Hikaru Nakamura endured a turbulent event, narrowly missing opportunities and ultimately falling short of expectations

Nakamura executed the plan with remarkable precision.

22...♖f8 23.♔g2 ♗b6 24.h4 ♕c5 25.f4 By placing the pawns on dark squares White limits the mobility of the opponent's bishop, which is quite useless as play happens on the light squares.

25...♕f5 26.♕c4

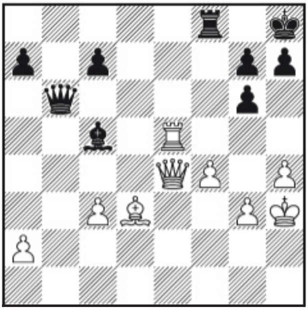


Keeping the queens as White plays for an attack.

26.♕xf5?! gxf5 27.♗xf5 g6 28.♗d3 ♔g7 would have been a huge relief for Black, even though the engine still claims White is winning.

26...♕f6 27.♖e5 ♕d6 28.c3 Controlling the d4-square.

28...♕a3 29.♔h3 ♕d6 30.♔g2 ♕a3 31.♔h3 ♕d6 32.♕e4 ♗c5 33.♔g2 ♕b6 34.♔h3

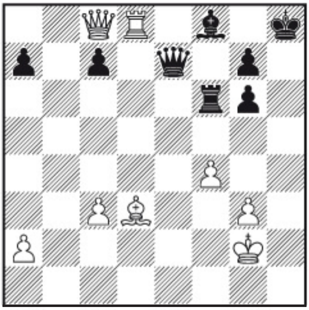


Nakamura demonstrates that he has learned the Soviet-school rule of "don’t rush."

34...♕d6 35.h5 Finally moving forward.

35...♕d7+ 36.♔g2 ♗d6 37.♖e6 ♖f6 38.♖e8+ ♗f8 39.♕a8 ♕d6 40.♖d8 ♕e7 41.hxg6 hxg6 41...h6 42.♗c4 would lead to a mate after ♗f7 or ♕d5.

42.♕c8!



Now the attack starts on the h-file, combined with the a2-g8 diagonal, leaving no room for the black king to hide.

42...♕c5 43.♗e4 g5 44.fxg5 ♕f2+ 45.♔h3 ♖f7 46.g6 ♖f6 47.♕g4 ♕f1+ 48.♗g2 ♕c1 49.♕h4+ ♕h6 50.♗d5 The threat of ♗f7 would lead to loss of the bishop on f8.

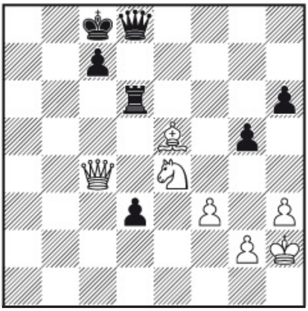
1-0

A strange loss for a World Champion, but Gukesh seemed unaffected as he repeated his “trick” - he turned a clearly inferior position into a win against Wei Yi in the next round.

The last round saw one decisive game: Caruana beat Gukesh to secure a shared second, overtaking the World Champion in the standings. It was a typical game for this event: the lack of time led to mistakes and missed chances. Caruana misplayed a winning position into a draw, only for Gukesh to miss the draw at the very end.

Fabiano **Caruana – Gukesh** D

13th Norway Chess 2025 Stavanger NOR (10.2)



46...♖d5 White was winning for a long time and here he needs to decide what to do with the attacked bishop on e5.

47.f4? This lets the win slip.

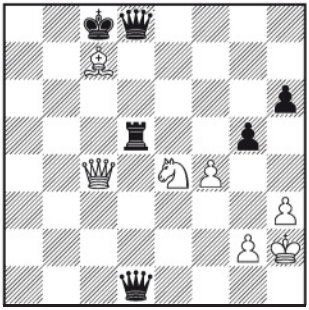
47.♗f6! moving away with tempo was correct. After 47...♕d7 48.♗c3 the pawn is stopped as 48...d2 49.♕a2! threatens both mate on a8 and the pawn on d2, leading to a capture of the dangerous passed pawn. That’s why it was important to lure the black queen to d7. With more time on the clock Caruana would have found this, but in the game he didn’t have that time;

47.♗c3 d2 is a draw now as ♕a2 won’t be threatening a mate on a8;

47.♕a6+! ♔b8 48.♗g3 was another winning idea, but not simple at all. After 48...d2 49.♗f2! threatens the decisive check on a7. An illustrative line is 49...d1♕ 50.♗a7+ ♔a8 51.♗d4+! cutting the communication between the queen on d1 and the rook on d5 51...♔b8 52.♕a7+ ♔c8 53.♕a8+ ♔d7 54.♕xd5+ ♔c8 55.♕a8+ ♔d7 56.♘c5+ and White will deliver mate with the combined attack of the three pieces.

47...d2 48.♗xc7 d1♕??

The playing hall



At the last hurdle, Gukesh falters.

48...♕xc7 had to be played, even if the position after 48...♕xc7 49.♕xd5 ♕xf4+ 50.♘g3 may not have looked too clear to him. In fact, Black has a fortress after something like 50...♔c7 when White cannot untangle.

49.♗xd8+ ♔xd8 50.♘c3! The double attack that decides the game. Black resigned.

1-0

If we take a look at the chances a player created, the winner should have been Caruana.

He started with a loss from a dead-drawn position with Nakamura, deep into the endgame and thanks to his lack of time. He bounced back immediately by beating Wei Yi with the black pieces in mere 28 moves. He proceeded to beat Erigaisi and was pressing for a win against Gukesh. He was winning against Carlsen (see above), beat Wei Yi again in round seven and was winning against Erigaisi in round eight. This was the moment when time-trouble hit him hard - he missed a defence by his opponent and even went on to lose. This was followed by another loss, this time by Carlsen (see above) and the topsy-turvy win against Gukesh in the last round.

Caruana was looking inspired and determined, but he was perhaps the biggest victim of the unforgiving time control.

The showdown wasn't just on the chess tables. The players were invited to a day of games, which included them being dressed up as cowboys. Here, Magnus Carlsen with his wife Ella Victoria

THE FUTURE OF CLASSICAL CHESS

While the tournament was very exciting, it doesn't quite answer the question when it comes to the direction classical chess should be taking.

What we saw in Norway was an attempt to make classical chess more "dynamic" and error-prone by not giving the players additional time, but that led to a lower quality of the games. And here comes the problem: should classical chess be about the highest quality possible, should it be made as entertaining as possible (by shortening the time control, leading to more mistakes) or should it take the middle road?

All three options have been explored and experimented with, but with no clear answer. In fact, there cannot be a clear answer, because the answer will depend on what the viewers want. Do they want entertainment, do they want instructive value, do they want both? Every viewer wants a different thing, but all of these are provided for in one form or another in our modern chess universe.

It seems to me that trying to combine all these elements into a single product called "classical chess" is not quite right, simply because the principle of "one size fits all" does not apply here. Ultimately, there is nothing wrong with the time control in Norway, but it would be nice if classical chess was first and foremost about quality and we had a unified time control. However, in spite of *gens una sumus*, the agreement on what that control should be, is not around the corner.

STANDINGS

#	NAME	GAMES	WON	LOSS	DRAW	ARMAGEDDON WINS	PTs
01	**Magnus Carlsen**	10	3	1	6	2	16
02	**Fabiano Caruana**	10	4	3	3	1	15.5
03	**Dommaraju Gukesh**	10	4	4	2	1	14.5
04	**Hikaru Nakamura**	10	2	1	7	2	14
05	**Arjun Erigaisi**	10	2	3	5	4	13
06	**Wei Yi**	10	0	3	7	5	9.5

NORWAY CHESS

THE RUSSIAN SPHINX

By Grandmaster Raymond Keene OBE

Images taken from the book The Russian Sphinx, volume 1, by Sergei Voronkov and courtesy of the Elk and Ruby publishing house

In CHESS the Musical, Sir Tim Rice puts to music (courtesy of the male half of ABBA) a roll of honour of the world chess champions. Of that illustrious list one of my favourites is Alexander Alekhine, world champion from 1927 to 1935 and again from 1937-1946, when he died in Portugal, undefeated, uniquely , still in possession of the world crown.

I bring up Alekhine specifically, because Elk and Ruby have just brought out the first volume in what promises to be a major tetralogy , throwing new light on the life, career and accomplishments of one of the greatest of world champions.

Alexander Alekhine , *The Russian Sphinx* , *Volume 1*, by Sergey Voronkov. Alekhine has encountered criticism for ducking a rematch against Capablanca (from whom he had seized the sceptre in a mighty battle of attrition in 1927) instead preferring a 1929 clash between Alekhine and Bogoljubov. By accepting Bogoljubov's challenge , Alekhine recognised that his fellow Russian emigre had certainly earned his rights to the title match, specifically by virtue of his victories in such mega-tournaments as Pistyan 1922, Carlsbad 1923, Moscow 1925 and Bad Kissingen 1928, the latter two ahead of Capablanca himself.

Indeed, the global chess community breathed a huge welcoming sigh of relief at the buccaneering style of the 1929 battles, when compared with the arid war of attrition waged by Capablanca and Alekhine (most games were Queen's Gambits, nearly all drawn). Similarly, the uncompromising willingness to take risks was greeted most favourably by the chess commentariat, when compared with the doubtless more accurate, but undeniably tedious wastes of seemingly endless draws in the previous Alekhine v Capablanca contest.

The chess public at large was, therefore hungering and thirsting for the swashbuckling attitude of Alekhine and Bogoljubov, both of whom were prepared to hazard downright errors, but combative ones, in their quest for victory.

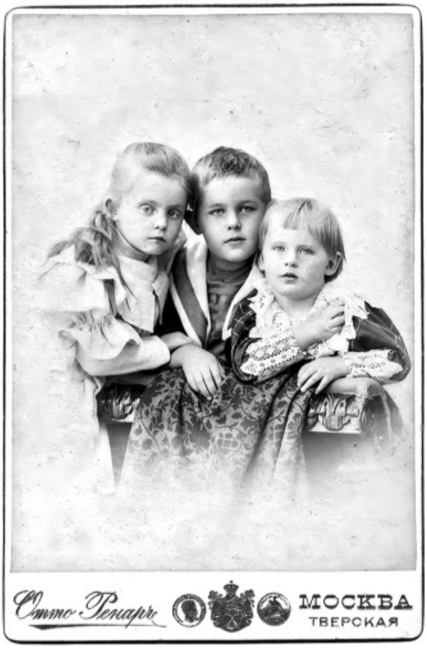
Alexander Alexandrovitch Alekhine , one of the most brilliant and charismatic figures in the history of the game, was World Chess Champion from 1927 (when he defeated Capablanca) to 1935 and again from 1937 (when he regained the title from the Dutch Grandmaster Max Euwe) until Alekhine's death in 1946.

After the Russian Revolution of 1917 Alekhine already cast himself in the role of émigré. There was no way such a free spirit could possibly have existed for long within the intellectual straitjacket of the fledgling USSR. Alekhine, therefore, found a way to escape to France and start life anew as a chess professional.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, Alekhine was still a resident of France, thus, unfortunately, falling into the hands of the Nazi occupation forces, who quickly recognised the propaganda value of exploiting the presence of the World Chess Champion.

Indeed, in the early 1940's Alekhine won some of his most brilliant games and notched up several impressive tournament victories. In these Nazi-run events Alekhine completely outclassed the great Paul Keres the Estonian Grandmaster who had triumphed at the elite AVRO super-tournament of 1938.

Had Alekhine confined himself to playing chess, all might have been well. Tragically for him, he had also unwisely allowed his name to become associated with widely publicised anti-Semitic slurs in the Nazi controlled *Pariser Zeitung* against such eminent Jewish titans of the game as Emanuel Lasker, Aron Nimzowitsch and Samuel Reshevsky. For this reason perhaps, Alekhine had been denied a visa to America, where a much anticipated rematch for the world title might have been staged between him and his erstwhile victim, Capablanca.



Varvara, Alexei and Alexander Alekhine. The future world champion looks about four years old, which means that the photo was probably taken in 1896. From K. Eggert's archive. Published for the first time.

Quite possibly these clumsy articles were forgeries, as he was later to claim, but if so, Alekhine did insufficient at the time to distance himself from them. If, on the other hand, they were genuine, as many still suspect, it was an entirely superfluous gesture to cultivate favour with his Nazi overlords. The mere fact of Alekhine being World Champion and gracing Nazi tournaments in Salzburg, Munich, Krakow and Prague with his illustrious presence, would have been quite sufficient for propaganda purposes.

By late 1943, though, it had become clear to Alekhine that the Nazi imperium was tottering and it was time to depart. After turning up late for a chess display against the German officer corps in Paris, Alekhine departed by train to the Spain of Generalissimo Franco, where a variety of chess events were conceived in his honour. It seems that Alekhine had no trouble passing from France to Spain, and he arrived in Madrid, pockets bulging with Reichs Marks, which had still retained their value at that time.

For other eminent members of the European intelligentsia, though, crossing the Pyrenees to escape the Nazis was far more of an ordeal. In order to reach Spain by the officially approved route, it was necessary to hold an exit visa from France, an entry visa to Spain and, on top of all that, a letter of transit. Shades of the movie *Casablanca*, which describes exactly that kind of bureaucratic nightmare.

One strangely Quixotic figure, the American Varian Fry, even set himself up as a kind of anti Nazi Scarlet Pimpernel, with an ambitious programme to rescue prominent Europeans from the Damoclean Swastika. On his list of potential exiles were Andre Gide, Max Ernst, Marcel Duchamp and Andre Breton, none of whom, as it happened, needed to be rescued, since most of them were already in New York. Those whom Fry did help to escape included Thomas Mann’s brother and son, Heinrich and Golo, not to mention Franz Werfel, at that time married to the serially polyandrous Alma Mahler, who also formed part of the exodus.

Apart from visa complications, the fleeing intellectuals were also advised to travel light, since the train journey, across the Pyrenees, usually involved stopping at Cerbère on the French side of the frontier, before proceeding to the station at Port Bou on the Spanish section of the border.

Alekhine possessed the necessary documents, so his transition in 1943 would have presented no problems to him. Those taking the Cerbère route, who had the required documents, were permitted to stay in comfort on the train, for the crucial leap from Cerbère to Port Bou. For the group assisted by Fry, things were less simple. Initially the border crossing was controlled by Vichy French officials, who were quite relaxed about the requisite paperwork. As hostilities progressed, the Nazis took control and escape became that much more arduous.

Alexander Alekhine at the Stockholm 1912 tournament

Alma Mahler, for example, was told to bring one suitcase. She brought twelve, packed with her jewellery and copies of Gustav Mahler’s musical compositions. At Cerbère she was obliged to detrain, clamber clandestinely over an unguarded small hill, and rejoin the same train with her luggage (guarded by the faithful Fry) at Port Bou.

Others were less fortunate. The German/Jewish philosopher and essayist Walter Benjamin, made it to the haven of Port Bou, only to be turned back by the border equivalent of the Guardia Civil. Overnight, unable to face the prospect of deliverance into the hands of the Nazis, who would undoubtedly have sent him to a concentration camp, Benjamin committed suicide by taking a large dose of morphine. A few tablets were left over and another celebrated (Hungarian) Jewish writer, Arthur Koestler, also attempted to kill himself by ingesting the remainder. These turned out to be insufficient and Koestler had to wait another four decades before successfully self-terminating. Not long after, Stefan Zweig himself, though in Brazil and in little danger from the Nazis, would also take the suicide route, writing: "My own power has been expended after years of wandering homeless."

Koestler it was who, having eventually reached the safe haven offered by the United Kingdom, went on to coin the term "Mimophant" to describe the mercurial Bobby Fischer, Alekhine's later successor as World Chess Champion; a Mimophant being a "hybrid species, a cross between a mimosa and an elephant. A member of this species is sensitive like a mimosa where his own feelings are concerned, and thick-skinned like an elephant trampling over the feelings of others."

As for Alekhine, his circumstances in the Iberian Peninsula gradually worsened. During the war years, organising chess events was not at the top of the agenda and Alekhine turned to drink. His results deteriorated, leading to some embarrassing defeats against opponents whom he could normally have thrashed in simultaneous displays.

He ended his days, a tragically displaced person, holed up at The Palace Hotel, Estoril, in the environs of Lisbon, out of money, out of luck and out of opponents, an invitation to the London 1946 Victory tournament having been rescinded when protests were made concerning his alleged authorship of the anti-Semitic *Pariser Zeitung* diatribes.

In 1985 I interviewed the long-standing barman at the Palace Hotel, who remembered Alekhine well, asserting that a down at heel World Chess Champion of Franco-Russian background blended rather well with the international assortment of agents, spies and generally rootless usual suspects who had congregated around Lisbon at that time.

A final lifeline was thrown, when a challenge to Alekhine for the world title was issued by Mikhail Botvinnik, via the Soviet Chess authorities. The British Chess Federation was to be the host, and it would have been a fascinating clash of ideas. Sadly it was not to be, since Alekhine, the only champion ever to die in possession of the title, choked on a piece of meat and passed away on the evening of March 25, 1946.

Alekhine was unfortunate in selecting both his enemies and his friends. As a Russian aristocrat, he enraged the nascent but increasingly influential Bolshevik chess fraternity by defecting to France after the Russian Revolution. Worse, he befriended chess enthusiast Hans Frank, Gauleiter of the Nazi controlled Generalgouvernement of Poland during the occupation, later to be executed at Nuremberg for war crimes. Finally, Alekhine alienated the post-war Jewish chess community by failing to distance himself with sufficient clarity from the *Pariser Zeitung* fulminations against Jewish chess grandmasters.

Of course, such close associations with prominent Nazis were later to contribute to the denial of his American visa and his final days of destitution as a refugee in an entirely different kind of Palace.

"*Don't be stupid*, *be a smarty*,
Come and join the Nazi Party!"

Who could forget these immortal words from the Mel Brooks spoof opera, *Springtime for Hitler*, in his movie *The Producers*? Politically incorrect side-splitting apart, the invitation was a very real one for those within the influence of the Third Reich. Very few prominent chess players succumbed to the lure of becoming a card-carrying member of the Nazi Party. One such who did succumb was Max Blümich, who notoriously wrote Jacques Mieses, Jewish Grandmaster and author of the standard German chess primer, out of history and even out of authorship of his own book.

More importantly, great controversy has arisen over the question of whether Alexander Alekhine, World Champion from 1927-1935 and again from 1937-1946, was a Nazi. Vast amounts of ink have been expended on this question, but now Dr Christian Rohrer of Stuttgart University has published a paper which must surely represent something approaching the last word on this sensitive matter.

But first, a brief digression on current allegations of racism, wokery and gender identity.

Racism (as a scientific concept rather than just a prejudice) might be termed to have been invented by the notable polymath Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911, *pictured below*). A relative of Charles Darwin, Galton set out to prove that Darwin's belief in the inheritance of acquired characteristics, as part of his general theory of evolution, was in fact justified. Learning this surprised me, since I was brought up in the conviction, reinforced by many a Sir David Attenborough TV programme, that the inheritance of acquired characteristics was heretical anathema to true Darwinists. But no, Darwin believed at first in this "heresy", until Galton's experiments with rabbits inadvertently disproved it. Galton went on both to invent the theory and recommend the practice of eugenics (his *Enquiry into Human Faculty and its Development* appeared in 1883), on which much Nazi ideology is based.

Zurich, 1926. This photo was probably taken on 28th September, when Alekhine arrived there during his Swiss tour. His son is nearly five years old. When Anneliese went to the United States in winter, he was almost a year younger...

Eugenics posited that purity of race, achieved by breeding, improved humanity. In fact the opposite is true. Exogamy strengthens the biological unit, rather than weakening it, in much the same way as entertaining a wide range of thought and encouraging debate improves, rather than undermines, the thinking process.

Indeed, I would go further, endorsing the conclusions of the Human Genome Project, and say that race does not biologically exist. Interestingly, the motto of the World Chess Federation, FIDÉ, is "*Gens Una Sumus*". This may be translated as "We Are One Race" — but not, as in the mischievously false anagrammatic misconstruction by British Grandmaster Jon Speelman, "Us uses guns man".

According to the Human Genome Project, so called "race" is simply nature's reaction to climate, geographical conditions and the prevailing topological brightness and angle of the sun. Consider that human and chimpanzee DNA is identical to over 95 per cent, while we even share 50 per cent of our genetic footprint with the humble mushroom! So how much closer are all humans to each other? In other words, to subscribe to racism nowadays equates with being a fantasist, or perhaps just a fool.

Although chess is conveniently black and white, discussions around the hot topics of racism and gender identity are of a greyer hue. Nevertheless, the modern preoccupation with racism, far from coincidentally, mirrors the obsession with gender politics. The CEO of USA Weightlifting, Phil Andrews, recently observed that to object to trans competitors who were born male entering female championships (see the case of Laurel Hubbard, the muscular New Zealander,) is to be on the wrong side of history. Though this is a grey area, to me it seems that entry into female competition by a former male, endowed with the upper body strength of the male physique, prejudices the opportunities of other weightlifters born female.

Gender, however, is less controversial in battles of the mind. Muscle power and brain power are quite different. In most chess events, such as the World Cup , there is no longer a separation of sexes or genders. Strength at the game, purely and simply, decides who competes or not. Brian Callaghan OBE, for example — famous for organising superb chess events at his Caleta Hotel in Gibraltar — is renowned for having broken down gender barriers in chess competitions. Callaghan is a pioneer in this respect and hoped to prove that women Grandmasters can easily hold their own with men, once fully freed from the categorisation of the Soviet era ghetto, which insisted on separating the genders, depriving women of the chance to directly confront the best men. In that sense, Brian Callaghan is incontrovertibly on the right side of history.

What of those, equally incontrovertibly, on the wrong side of history? Hitler's Nazis succeeded in stranding themselves in exactly that place, which brings me back to the intriguing case of one of the greatest chess players of all time: Dr Alexander Alexandrovich Alekhine, the subject of Voronkov's new book.

The story of Alekhine's life is a mixture of powerful artistry and tragically misdirected genius. A political trimmer, he supported whatever regime would allow him to earn a living as a chess player. The nadir came, as we have seen, in 1941, when he published three articles in the Nazi press directed against Jewish players. His subsequent denial of authorship was disproved in 1956 when the manuscripts were found among his wife's effects.

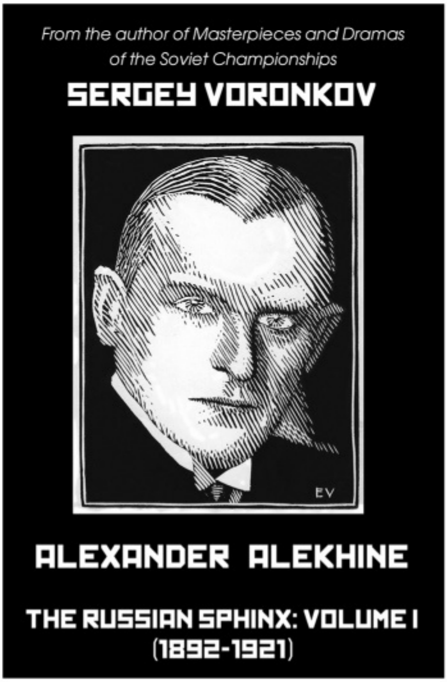
Moreover, a predilection for alcohol and the turn of historical fate compounded to produce one of the most turbulent careers in the history of chess. Alekhine was born in Moscow in 1892 of a family that was both wealthy and aristocratic. He and his brother were taught chess by their mother and in 1909 he gained the Master title in St Petersburg.

In the summer of 1914 Alekhine was playing in Mannheim, Germany, when he was interned by the Germans at the outbreak of the Great War. His release was doubtless obtained by family influence. In 1915 he joined the Russian Red Cross and served on the Austrian front. The Russian Revolution of 1917 destroyed the family fortune. Thereafter he worked as a magistrate and chess player, winning the first Soviet Championship in 1920. He joined the Communist Party in 1921 and worked as an official interpreter, but later settled in France and became a naturalised French citizen. From the safety of exile, and having escaped from Lenin and Stalin, he criticised the Soviet regime. Alekhine's later attempts to be reconciled with the Soviet authorities failed. So he never returned to Russia, where the Communist government was giving increasing prominence and support to chess and its foremost exponents.

From 1921 to 1927 Alekhine (*pictured below*, *1931*) ran up a string of tournament victories, but his ultimate goal was to take the World Championship from the hitherto invincible José Raul Capablanca. In 1927 the Cuban finally accepted Alekhine's challenge; after a mammoth struggle in Buenos Aires Capablanca unexpectedly conceded the title. Although Alekhine now dominated the chess world like a Colossus, refusing to grant Capablanca a return match and brushing aside the resistance of other established grandmasters as if they were mere beginners, discerning critics noticed disturbing signs of impatience in Alekhine's games. Not content with the inevitable incidence of drawn games, especially when one is facing strong opposition and one has the black pieces, Alekhine began to force events at every turn, running hideous risks in his desperate efforts to crush every opponent.

By 1935 Alekhine's impatience had become compounded by a new reliance on the stimulation offered by alcohol. More or less in a perpetual stupor, he lost his title in 1935 to the much younger Dutchman, Max Euwe. The pre-match contract had stipulated that Alekhine had the right to a return bout. Alarmed by his loss, Alekhine suppressed his desire for drink and regained the title from Euwe in 1937, thus becoming the first man to win the World Championship twice. He retained the title until his death, the only man ever to die while still World Champion.

He was playing for France in the Buenos Aries Olympiad of 1939 when war was declared and as captain he refused to allow his team to play against Germany. On returning to Europe he joined the French army , once again as an interpreter. At the fall of France , however, he fell under Nazi influence. Not only did the aforementioned regrettable articles appear in print, perhaps losing him the chance of a visa to the US, he also played in tournaments in Germany and occupied countries. After the war, these actions were later construed as collaboration and in 1946 he was refused an invitation to the London tournament. He was also suffering from the effects of years of hard drinking.


From the author of Masterpieces and Dramas of the Soviet Championships
SERGEY VORONKOV
EV
ALEXANDER ALEKHINE
THE RUSSIAN SPHINX: VOLUME I
(1892-1921)

A great book by Sergey Voronkov, published by Elk and Ruby

Alekhine was, of course, still World Champion - the opportunity for matches having been severely limited by the constraints of World War Two. However, the young challenger Mikhail Botvinnik was eager for a match to take place. This was arranged in March 1946 under the auspices of the British Chess Federation, but the day after the news was dispatched by telegram, Alekhine died.

Alekhine's opponent in two world championship matches was another Russian émigré, Yefim Bogoljubov. He was the one man ever to have held the German and Soviet Championships at the same time. Bogoljubov defected from the USSR in 1926 and was declared a traitor, his name

Argentinian journalist Carlos Portela: "He sits down at the piano and first starts to play Gypsy songs, and then Russian ones – he performs them very well." (Caras y Caretas, 4th September 1926). General National Archive (Argentina)

only being rehabilitated in 1977, 25 years after his death. Bogoljubov was a portly figure, eternal optimist and a child of nature, possessed of a river of flowing ideas, when in action on the chessboard. His poetic skills in that medium were not matched by his appearance. At one tournament the official photographer cut Bogoljubov, in fact the senior grandmaster present, out of the picture since he thought that a rotund gentleman brandishing a giant Bratwurst and a Stein of beer had no place in a photographic record of chess grandmasters.

Although Bogoljubov participated with equal vigour in Nazi chess programmes and tournaments, he had the good sense to keep his mouth shut and his quill dry. The opprobrium which attached itself to Alekhine never affected Bogoljubov with the same venomous intensity.

The last word on Alekhine's Nazi affiliations has apparently now been pronounced by Dr Christian Rohrer in his paper on Alekhine and the Nazis: "With regard to his actions and behaviour towards the National Socialist regime, Alekhine is not aptly characterised as an 'opportunist', at least if one is to mean that an opportunist seizes opportunities that he considers favourable for himself, accepting negative consequences and disregarding general norms and values. Alekhine, however, by no means simply seized opportunities that presented themselves to him here and there. Rather, he himself contributed significantly to the fact that these opportunities arose in the first place. Alekhine's actions and behaviour were those of a calculated tactician who - in the manner characteristic of a chess master - thinks in terms of variations. With his two-pronged strategy, Alekhine tried to achieve the maximum for himself and his wife, namely a semblance of their successful life in peacetime. But he failed in many ways, as a human being and as a chess player. In the end, he opened himself up to collaboration with the criminal National Socialist regime, but he was only able to escape from its sphere of power at a late stage, without his wife no less, his health and his reputation in the chess world were ruined, a match for the world chess championship was no longer possible and his world championship title held only questionable value."

I broadly agree with this judgement, and was particularly impressed by Dr Rohrer's subtle differentiation between types of opportunism. I would, however, disagree that Alekhine's World Title had become worthless. True, he was in straightened circumstances when he died in 1946, but Alekhine's powers of recuperation were legendary and, at his time of passing, the USSR and British Chess Federations were, as previously noted, in the process of funding and hosting a challenge by the rising Soviet star Mikhail Botvinnik.

There is only one way to compare the relative chessboard strengths of Alekhine and Botvinnik during the period 1940 to 1946. That bridge is provided by Paul Keres, the Estonian Grandmaster, who had scored a notable triumph at the AVRO tournament of 1938 (ahead of Botvinnik, Alekhine, Euwe and Capablanca) and thus occupied a special place in the halls of honour of world chess. Somehow Keres contrived to compete in both Soviet and German events during the war period, a feat of inter-dictatorial legerdemain, balancing his career between Stalin and Hitler, which many observers of the chess scene believed would lead to Keres' liquidation during the early years of the Iron Curtain. Not so: Keres survived to be recognised as a permanent member of the world's leading chess elite for another two decades after the close of The Great Patriotic War, the Russian defence against Hitler in World War Two.

In tournaments from 1940/1941 Keres finished ahead of Botvinnik in one event, but behind him in another. His score vs Botvinnik amounted to four draws and one loss. As for Alekhine, Keres tied with him once, during the 1940-1943 period, but finished behind him three times and in individual games he lost out by three losses with three draws and again, no wins. If Alekhine had survived to meet Botvinnik's challenge, I believe that the old warhorse would have lost the match, but, as the Klingons say in Star Trek, it would have been a glorious defeat.

The game this month demonstrates Alekhine's typical gift for turning a dry endgame advantage into a direct attack against the black king.

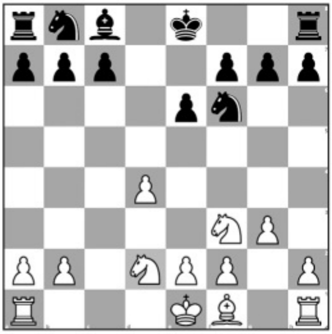
Alexander Alekhine vs. Efim Bogoljubov

Match, Warsaw, 1943, game two

Notes by Alexander Alekhine augmented by comments from our friendly engine Stockfish 17.1. Pancho is the pet name for our friendly Stockfish 17.1 engine that assists the analysis of our game's moves.*

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. ♘f3 ♘f6 4. g3 dxc4 5. ♕a4+ ♕d7 The exchange of Queens that Black will force with this manoeuvre gives him very few advantages, because it does not solve the chief problem, which is the development of the queen's bishop.

6. ♕xc4 ♕c6 7. ♘bd2 ♕xc4 8. ♘xc4 ♗b4+ 9. ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 10. ♘cxd2



Preferable to 10.♘fxd2 which, after 10…♘c6 11.♘f3 ♘b4! would have offered Black some prospects. Despite the simplification Black still faces a difficult problem: if he is compelled to play ...c6 what future will be left for the bishop? Boglojubov takes a radical measure; with the aim of protecting the points he prepares to castle long. In the continuation we shall see the weak side of this strategy.

10...♘c6 *Since this game, this move has been absent from Master play.There was a draw after 10…♗d7, in Kochyev-Taimanov, St Petersburg, 1998.* (*Pancho**)

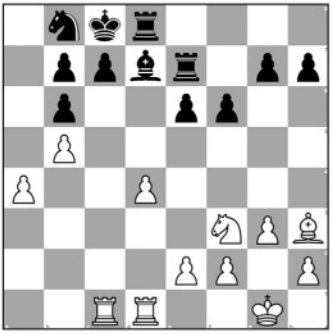
11.♗g2 ♗d7 12.O–O O–O–O 13.♖ac1 ♖he8 14.♘c4 It goes without saying that White will not allow ...e5.

14... ♖e7 15.a3 ♗e8 16.♖fd1 ♘d5 17.b4 ♘b6 18.b5! An important move which forces the knight to withdraw and permits the blocking of the queen's side. For if 18...♘xc4 then 19.bxc6 ♘xa3 20.cxb7+ ♔xb7 21.♘e5+ ♔c8 22.♘c6

♗xc6 23.♗xc6 ♖d6 24.♖c3 followed by 25.♖a1 and wins.

18...♘b8 19.♘xb6+ axb6 20.a4 f6 21.♗h3 Threatening to advance the d-pawn.

21...♗d7

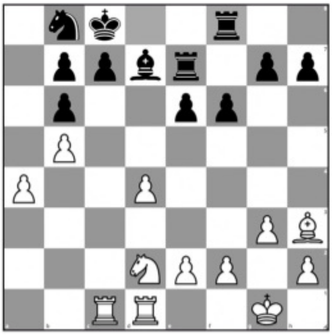


Now it seems that Black is at last going to free himself by 22... e5.

Although here, Black had better in 21... c6 22.♘e1 f5 23.e3 ♖c7 24.g4 g6 25.♖b1 cxb5 26.axb5 ♖d5 27.♗f1 fxg4 28.e4 ♖d8, when Black has effectively equalised. (Pancho*)

22. ♘d2!! Decisive, because if 22... e5 there follows 23. ♘c4 with the threat of 24. ♘xb6 mate. What follows now is practically all forced.

22... ♖f8



Black can best limit the damage with, 22...♗e8 23.♘c4 ♘d7 24.♗g2 ♔b8 25.♖d2 ♘f8 26.e3 ♘g6 27.♖a1 ♗f7 28.a5 e5 29.d5 e4 30.d6 cxd6 31.♘xb6, after which, he remains worse, but no worse than beforehand (Pancho*)

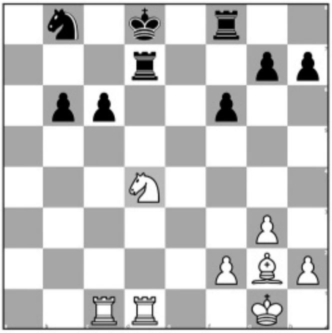
23.♗g2!

23.♘c4 would allow Black to play 23... ♔d8, followed by ...♗c8.

23... c6 24.♘c4 ♔c7 25.e4 cxb5 Desperation, since there is no defence against the advance of the d-pawn.

26.axb5 ♗xb5 27.d5! More accurate than 27.♘a3+ ♗c6 28.d5, after which Black would not have been under any obligation to exchange pawns.

27...exd5 28.♘a3+ ♗c6 29.exd5 ♖d7 30.♘b5+ ♔d8 31.dxc6 bxc6 32.♘d4!



Already a bishop ahead…. This wins at least a pawn. An instructive game from the strategic point of view.

Black resigns 1-0

TWO GREAT GAMES FROM THE 3RD CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL OPEN

By IM Shaun Taulbut

This tournament attracted a strong entry with several grandmasters and was won jointly by Michael Adams and Brandon Clarke with 7/9.

We look at a game of each of the winners, starting with Brandon Clarke's win against Marcos Camacho Collados.

Brandon **Clarke** -
Marcos Camacho **Collados**

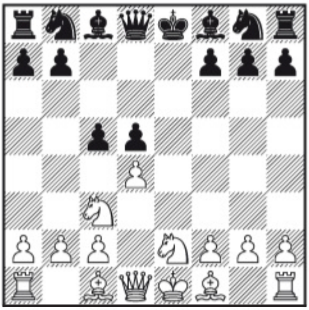
3rd Cambridge Int Open Cambridge ENG (8.5)

1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 This can lead to a Closed Sicilian if White fianchettos his king bishop and does not play d4 himself but follows up with the quieter d3.

2...e6 3.♘ge2 White now retains the option of going back into a normal Sicilian with d4 and this presents Black with a choice as to development.

3...d5 Black advances in the centre which seems natural but does allow White to switch plans, perhaps best is either 3...♘f6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 or 3...♘c6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 reaching normal Sicilian positions

4.exd5 exd5 5.d4

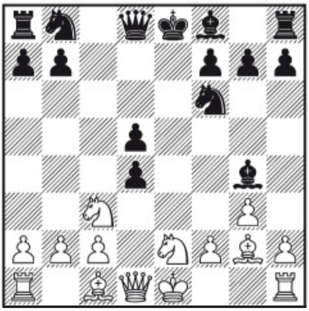


Black is behind in development but he should be able to limit the White initiative.

5...♘f6 6.g3 Also playable was 6.♗e3 c4 7.g3 ♗g4 8.♗g2 ♗b4 9.f3 ♗e6 with a slight edge for White.

6...♗g4 A challenging move, Black pins the knight and threatens ...♗f3 but White has a clever continuation.

7.♗g2 cxd4



8.h3 Putting the question to the bishop; this is better than 8.♕xd4 ♘c6 9.♕a4 ♗b4 10.♔-0 ♕a5 11.♕xa5 ♗xa5 with only a slight edge for White.

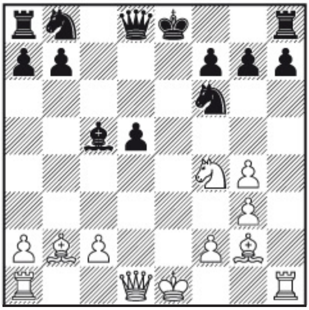
8...dxc3 Not the best; After 8...♗xe2 9.♕xe2+ ♗e7 10.♕b5+ ♘c6 11.♘xd5 ♘xd5 12.♗xd5 0-0 with a slight edge for White or 8...♗xh3 9.♖xh3 dxc3 10.♘xc3 ♗b4 11.♕e2+ ♕e7 12.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 13.♗d2 ♘c6 with a minute edge for White.

9.hxg4 cxb2 10.♗xb2 White has the two bishops and Black is under pressure on both long diagonals.

10...♗c5 10...♘c6 11.0-0 ♗c5 12.g5 ♘g4 13.♕xd5 ♕xd5 14.♗xd5 ♖d8 15.♗f3

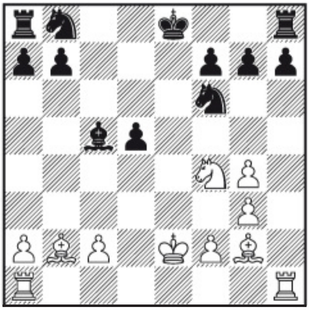
♘ce5 with counterplay for Black may be best here or 10...♕a5+ 11.♔f1 ♘bd7 when White has a small edge; If 10...♕b6 11.♖b1 is strong.

11.♘f4



The knight is very strong and Black is already worse as the pawn on d5 is weak.

11...♕a5+ 12.♔f1 ♕b5+ 13.♕e2+ ♕xe2+ 14.♔xe2

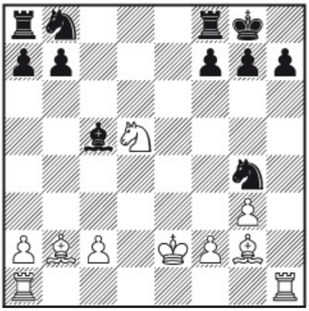


White already has strong threats such as g5 so Black decides to capture on g4.

14...♘xg4 After 14...0-0 15.♗xf6 gxf6 16.♘xd5 ♘d7 17.♗e4 ♖ae8 18.f3 is better for White as the Black kingside is broken beyond repair.

15.♘xd5 Also 15.♗xg7 ♖g8 16.♖xh7 ♘c6 17.♗xd5 is much better for White.

15...0-0

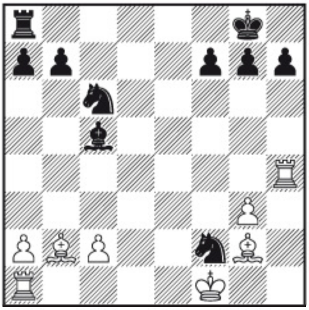


Black surrenders the exchange but the alternative was also difficult eg. 15...♘a6 16.♗xg7 ♖g8 17.♖xh7 0-0-0 18.c4 ♖ge8+ 19.♔f1 ♘xf2 20.♗f6.

16.♖h4 ♖e8+ After 16...f5 17.♘c7 ♘c6 18.♗d5+ ♔h8 19.♖ah1 with a mating attack.

17.♔f1 ♘xf2 If 17...f5 18.♘c7 ♘c6 19.♘xa8 ♖xa8 20.♖d1 is winning.

18.♘c7 ♘c6 19.♘xa8 ♖xa8



20.♖e1 White has the exchange for two pawns but also the Black knight on f2 is short of squares.

20...h5 Attempting to rescue the knight. After 20...h6 21.♖f4 ♖d8 22.♖xf2 ♗xf2 23.♔xf2, White stands significantly better.

21.♖xh5 ♗b6 22.♗f3 White traps the knight once again.

A view of the playing area

Photo: Rob Hammond and Adrian Elwin via the English Chess Federation

22...♘b4 23.♖g5 g6 If 23...f6 24.♗xf6 ♔f7 25.♗c3 ♘c6 26.♗d5+ ♔f8 27.♗xg7#.

24.♖ge5 f6 If 24...♖f8 25.♖5e2 ♘xa2 26.♗f6 ♗d8 27.♗xd8 ♖xd8 28.♖e8+ ♖xe8 29.♖xe8+ ♔g7 30.♔xf2 wins.

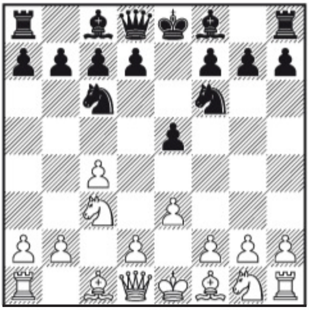
25.♖e7 ♖f8 26.♖xb7 ♘xc2 27.♗d5+ ♔h8 28.♗xf6+ White mates after the Black rook captures on f6 with ♖e8.

1-0

Mari **Bosiocic** - Michael **Adams**

3rd Cambridge Int Open Cambridge ENG (7.1)

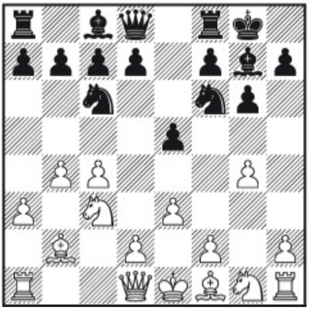
1.c4 e5 2.e3 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘c6



4.a3 White prevents the Black king bishop from coming to b4 and also makes the development on c5 unattractive because of b4, so Black decides to marry.

4...g6 5.b4 The queenside pawn advance and fianchetto is logical.

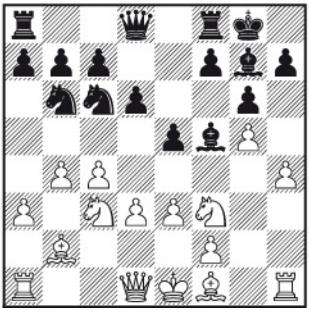
5...♗g7 6.♗b2 0-0 7.g4



Suddenly the game changes. The bayonet attack is ambitious as Black has made no mistakes.

7...d6 8.g5 ♘d7 9.h4 Black calmly develops in the face of the pawn storm.

9...♘b6 10.d3 ♗f5 11.♘f3



Possible was 11.♘ge2; after 11.e4, ♗e6 leaves the **d4** square weak.

11...e4 12.dxe4 ♗xe4 Black uses the pin.

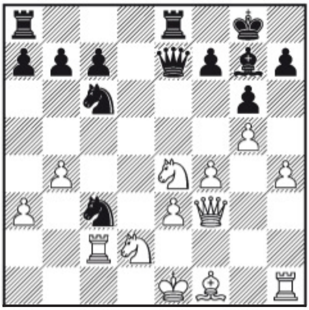
13.♘xe4 ♗xb2 14.♖a2 Perhaps not best - 14.♖b1 was worth consideration as after 14.♖b1 ♗xa3 15.b5 ♘e5 16.♖b3 is much better for White.

14...♕e7 15.♘fd2 15.♗d3 ♗g7 16.h5 is worth consideration.

15...♗g7 16.f4 This is loosening and Black can attack e3 16.h5 is worth consideration.

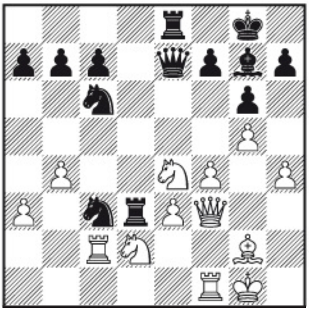
16...d5 17.cxd5 ♘xd5 18.♕f3 ♘c3 19.♖c2 Best is 19.♘xc3 ♗xc3 20.♔f2 ♖fe8 21.♘c4 White has a slight edge.

19...♖fe8



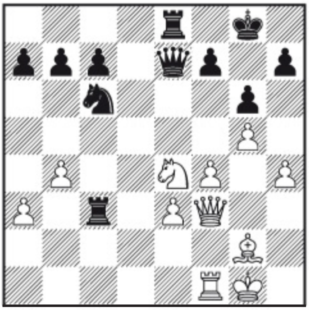
20.♗g2 If 20.♘xc3 ♘d4 is winning immediately.

20...♖ad8 21.0-0 ♖d33



Still gunning for e3 so White sacrifices the exchange on a temporary basis.

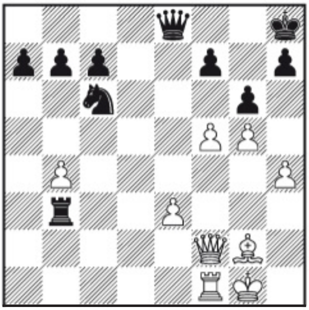
22.♘xc3 ♗xc3 23.♖xc3 ♖xc3 24.♘e4



White will recover the exchange because of ♘f6+ so Black harvests the White pawns.

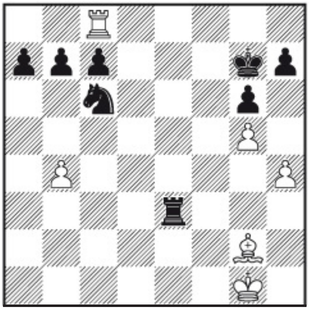
24...♖xa3 25.♕f2 After 25.♘f6+ ♔f8 26.♘xe8 ♕xe8 is better for Black.

25...♖b3 26.♘f6+ ♔h8 27.♘xe8 ♕xe8 28.f5



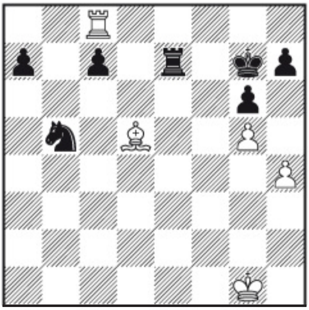
28.e4 ♖xb4 29.f5 gives White some chances but Black is much better.

28...♕xe3 29.♕xe3 ♖xe3 30.fxg6 fxg6 31.♖f8+ ♔g7 32.♖c8



32...♖e7 33.b5 After 33.♗xc6 34.bxc6 ♖a8 35.♖xa7 ♔f7 36.♖xa6 ♔e6 37.♔g2 ♔d5 Black is slightly better.

33...♘d4 34.♗xb7 ♘xb5 35.♗d5

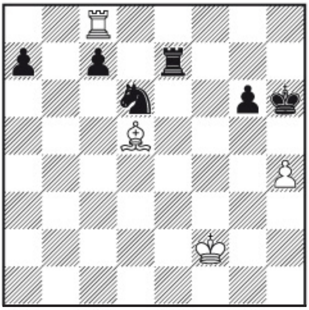


White threatens mate but Black has a defence.

35...h5 Also possible was 35...h6 36.♖g8+ ♔h7 37.h5 ♖g7.

36.gxh6+ After 36.♖g8+ ♔h7 37.♖a8 c5 Black is much better.

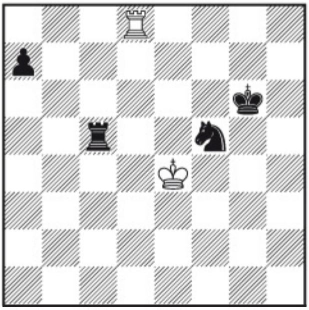
36...♔xh6 37.♔f2 ♘d6



38.♖a8 c5 39.♔f3 ♖c7 40.♔g4 c4 The passed pawn advances which costs White his bishop.

41.♖d8 ♘f5 42.♗e4 c3 43.h5 c2 44.♗xc2 ♖c4+ 45.♔f3 ♖xc2 46.hxg6 ♔xg6 47.♔e4 After 47.♖d7 a5 48.♖d5 a4 49.♖a5 ♖c4 is winning.

47...♖c5



Black defends the knight and cuts off the White king from the queenside. Black will push the pawn to a5 and then move his King over to the queenside to support the pawn, so White resigned

0-1

3RD CAMBRIDGE INT OPEN CAMBRIDGE - Leading Final Round 9 Standings:								
Rk	SNo	Name	FED	Rtg	Pts	TB1	TB2	TB3
1	1	GM Adams, Michael	ENG	2661	7	0	46	50.5
2	5	IM Clarke, Brandon Gi	ENG	2498	7	0	45.5	50
3	18	Li, Wenxiang	CHN	2342	6.5	0	47	51
4	3	GM Bosiocic, Marin	CRO	2511	6.5	0	46.5	50.5
5	7	IM Wadsworth, Matthew J	ENG	2484	6.5	0	44.5	49.5
6	9	GM Fernandez, Daniel H	ENG	2475	6.5	0	44.5	48.5
7	2	GM Tiviakov, Sergei	NED	2536	6.5	0	43	49.5
8	14	IM Mahadevan, Siva	IND	2385	6	0	49.5	54
9	4	GM Ghasi, Ameet K	ENG	2502	6	0	46	50
10	17	IM Balaji, Aaravamudhan	ENG	2346	6	0	45	49
11	6	GM Cuenca Jimenez, Jose Fernando	ESP	2495	6	0	43.5	47.5
12	24	FM Badacsonyi, Stanley	ENG	2289	6	0	43	47.5
13	10	IM Camacho Collados, Marcos	ESP	2462	6	0	43	47.5
14	8	IM Willow, Jonah B	ENG	2478	6	0	42.5	46
15	23	FM Pert, Max P	ENG	2290	6	0	37.5	41.5
16	19	IM Camacho Collados, Jose	WLS	2327	5.5	0	48.5	53
17	20	FM York-Weaving, Richard	ENG	2323	5.5	0	46	50.5
18	22	FM Fava, Lorenzo	ITA	2299	5.5	0	45	47
19	12	IM Pert, Richard G	ENG	2413	5.5	0	44.5	49
20	11	IM Ladron De Guevara Pinto, Paolo	ESP	2419	5.5	0	44	48
21	16	GM Wells, Peter K	ENG	2350	5.5	0	43.5	47.5
22	26	IM Cummings, David H.	CAN	2249	5.5	0	43.5	47.5
23	30	FM Badacsonyi, Frankie	ENG	2190	5.5	0	42	46
24	53	Majeed, Haroon	ENG	1999	5.5	0	42	45.5
25	82	Adams, George	ENG	1829	5.5	0	41.5	45
26	40	Shearsby, Jude	ENG	2133	5.5	0	40.5	44
27	29	CM Murawski, Jan	ENG	2191	5.5	0	40.5	44
28	55	Lebedev, Lion	ENG	1996	5.5	0	36.5	42
29	58	Verbytski, Oleg	ENG	1976	5.5	0	36	38.5
30	28	CM Nawalaniec, Adam	POL	2211	5	0	46	50.5
31	13	IM Haubro, Martin	DEN	2402	5	0	43.5	48
32	39	Vaidyanathan, Adithya	ENG	2137	5	0	40	43.5
33	34	Brewer, Callum D	ENG	2154	5	0	40	43.5
34	27	FM Sowray, Peter J	ENG	2219	5	0	39	43
35	62	Sasikumar, Srivathsan	ENG	1953	5	0	39	41.5
36	21	FM Kalavannan, Koby	ENG	2303	5	0	38.5	41.5
37	45	Brett, Andrew R	ENG	2057	5	0	38.5	41
38	79	Mittal, Aditya	ENG	1849	5	0	36.5	39
39	46	WFM Kueh, Audrey	ENG	2054	5	0	36	41
40	59	Cole, James	ENG	1972	5	0	36	38.5

4NCL - DIVISION ONE

MANX LIBERTY CLINCH 4NCL DIVISION ONE TITLE

By IM Shaun Taulbut

Division One 4NCL Champions are Manx Liberty, clear winners from Wood Green.

Manx Liberty has won Division One of the 4NCL (Four Nations Chess League) for the 2024-2025 season, with Wood Green finishing as runners-up. Manx Liberty secured the title with a strong performance, finishing ahead of Wood Green by a significant margin. The final match between the two teams, though decisive for the title, ended in a draw.

Manx Liberty have a number of strong East European Grandmasters and they have also recruited Shreyas Royal and Harry Grieve. Their closest match was against The Sharks with individual results as follows:

The Sharks 1		2383		Manx Liberty		2514		
121	w	Roberson, Peter T	i	2434	½ - ½	Kantor, Gergely	g	2578
122	b	Fernandez, Daniel Howard	g	2485	½ - ½	Erdos, Viktor	g	2542
123	w	Ghasi, Ameet K	i	2502	1 - 0	Lupulescu, Constantin	g	2577
124	b	Moreby, James	f	2397 e	1 - 0	Parligras, Mircea-Emilian	g	2507
125	w	O'Gorman, Tom	f	2453 e	½ - ½	Csonka, Balazs	i	2459
126	b	Price, Gwilym		2213	0 - 1	Royal, Shreyas	i	2465
127	w	Hryshchenko, Kamila	wf	2200 e	0 - 1	Grieve, Harry	i	2472
128	b	Varnam, Liam D		2126 e	½ - ½	Terbe, Julianna	wi	2224
					4 - 4			

Wood Green lost to The Sharks and Cheddleton Savills Catering in tough matches which thwarted their championship hopes.

Wood Green		2476		The Sharks 1		2383		
111	w	Adams, Michael	g	2661	1 - 0	Roberson, Peter T	i	2434
112	b	Harvey, Marcus R	i	2474	½ - ½	Moreby, James	f	2397 e
113	w	Wadsworth, Matthew J	i	2500	0 - 1	Fernandez, Daniel Howard	g	2485
114	b	Speelman, Jon S	g	2492	0 - 1	O'Gorman, Tom	f	2453 e
115	w	Haydon, David L	f	2354 e	0 - 1	Ghasi, Ameet K	i	2502
116	b	Turner, Matthew J	g	2435	1 - 0	Price, Gwilym		2213
117	w	Zhou, Yang-Fan	i	2418	1 - 0	Hryshchenko, Kamila	wf	2200 e
118	b	Toma, Katarzyna	wg	2266 e	0 - 1	Varnam, Liam D		2126 e
					3½ - 4½			

Wood Green						Cheddleton Savills Catering		
111	w	Harvey, Marcus R	i	2499	0 - 1	Lagarde, Maxime	*g	2604
112	b	Speelman, Jon S	g	2498	½ - ½	Pert, Richard G	i	2431 e
113	w	Murphy, Conor E	i	2447	0 - 1	Kirk, Ezra	i	2466 e
114	b	Wadsworth, Matthew J	i	2489	0 - 1	Fodor, Tamas Jr.	g	2509
115	w	Jackson, James P	i	2434 e	0 - 1	Pert, Max		2316
116	b	Houska, Jovanka	*i	2411 e	½ - ½	Eggleston, David J	i	2338
117	w	Zhou, Yang-Fan	i	2427	1 - 0	Arkell, Keith C	g	2329
118	b	Haydon, David L	f	2346 e	1 - 0	Pert, Nina	wc	2144 e
					3 - 5			

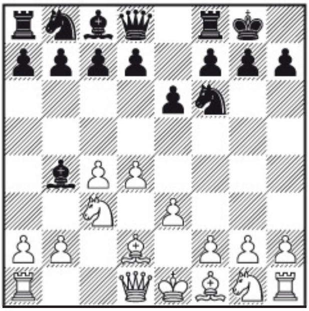
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	MP	GP
1	**Manx Liberty**		4-4	6-2	5½-2½	5-3	4-4	6½-1½	6-2	6-2	7-1	7½-½	7½-½	20	65
2	**Wood Green**	4-4		6-2	6-2	3-5	3½-4½	5-3	6-2	5-3	5-3	7-1	7-1	17	57½
3	**Wood Green Youth**	2-6	2-6		2½-5½	4½-3½	5½-2½	6½-1½	7-1	5-3	6½-1½	6½-1½	6½-½	16	54½
4	**Chessable White Rose 1**	2½-5½	2-6	5½-2½		5½-2½	2½-5½	5-3	5-3	4½-3½	6-2	5½-2½	4½-2½	16	48½
5	**Cheddleton Savills Catering**	3-5	5-3	3½-4½	2½-5½		5-3	4-4	4½-3½	4-4	6½-1½	4-4	4½-3½	13	46½
6	**The Sharks 1**	4-4	4½-3½	2½-5½	5½-2½	3-5		3-5	3-5	5½-2½	4-3	5-3	6½-1½	13	46½
7	**CSC/Kingston 1**	1½-6½	3-5	1½-6½	3-5	4-4	5-3		5½-2½	3½-4½	4½-3½	5-2	6-2	11	42½
8	**Barnet Knights A**	2-6	2-6	1-7	3-5	3½-4½	5-3	2½-5½		5-3	4½-3½	5-3	5-3	10	38½
9	**Blackthorne**	2-6	3-5	3-5	3½-4½	4-4	2½-5½	4½-3½	3-5		4-4	4-4	5-2	7	39½
10	**Barbican 4NCL**	1-7	3-5	1½-6½	2-6	1½-6½	3-4	3½-4½	3½-4½	4-4		4½-3½	6½-1½	5	34
11	**Alba**	½-7½	1-7	1½-6½	2½-5½	4-4	3-5	2-5	3-5	4-4	3½-4½		4½-3½	4	27½
12	**The Sharks 2**	½-7½	1-7	1½-6½	2½-4½	3½-4½	1½-6½	2-6	3-5	2-6	1½-6½	3½-4½		0	22½

We look at some of the games from these matches

Tamas **Fodor jr** – Matthew J **Wadsworth**

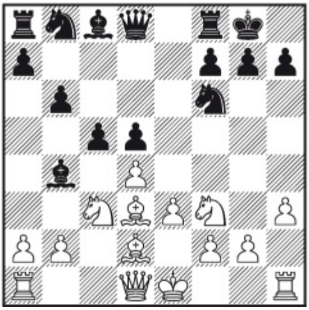
4NCL 2024–25 England ENG (6.64),

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 ♗e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e3 0-0 5.♗d2



A quiet continuation neutralising the pin by the Black bishop; this line avoids mainstream theory.

5...b6 6.♘f3 d5 7.cxd5 exd5 8.♗d3 c5 9.h3



An unusual move; Black now decides to exchange the light squared bishops.

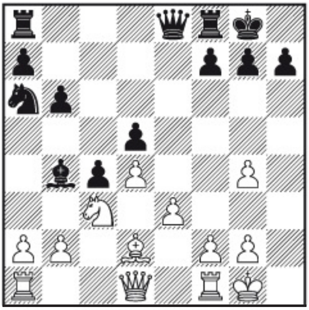
9...♗a6 10.♗xa6 ♘xa6 11.0-0 c4

Black pushes on and creates a queenside pawn majority. The alternative was 11...♖e8 12.dxc5 ♘xc5 13.a3 ♗xc3 14.♗xc3 ♘fe4 15.♖c1 ♖c8 when White is slightly better.

12.♘e5 ♕e8 12...♗xc3 13.♗xc3 ♘e4 14.♖e1 f6 15.♘f3 b5.

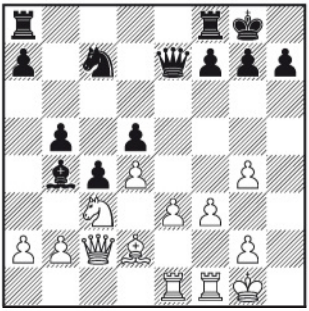
13.♘g4 ♘xg4 14.hxg4

White recaptures with the pawn to inhibit…f5 by Black.



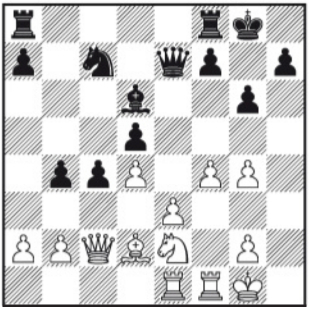
14...♘c7 15.f3 b5 16.♕c2 ♕e7 16...♗e7 is also playable.

17.♖ae1



White has the option of advancing with e4 or f4.

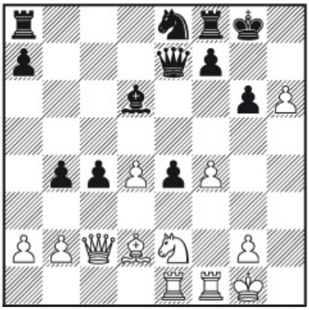
17...♗d6 18.f4 b4 19.♘e2 g6



Also playable is 19...a5 20.♘g3 g6.

20.g5 h6 Black decides to stop White from gaining too much of a bind on the kingside; the alternative was 20...a5 21.♘g3 ♘b5.

21.gxh6 ♘e8 22.e4 dxe4

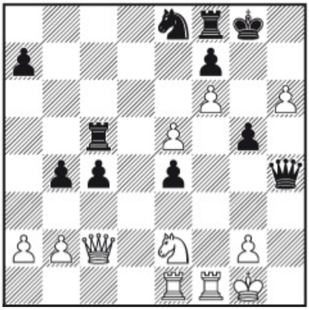


After 22...♛xe4 23.♕xe4 dxe4 24.f5 White has some pressure on the kingside.

23.f5 23.♕xc4 is also worth consideration.

23...♕h4 24.♗f4 g5 25.♗e5 ♖c8 If 25...f6 26.♕xc4+.

26.f6 ♗xe5 27.dxe5 ♖c5



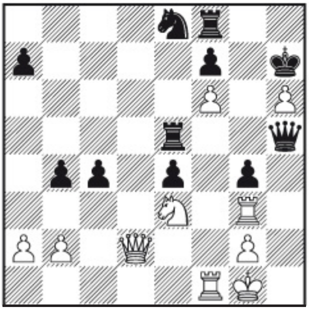
A complex position in which White has practical chances with his more active pieces.

28.♘d4 ♖xe5 29.♘c6 ♖e6 30.♘e7+ ♔h7 After 30...♔h8 31.♘f5.

31.♘f5 ♕g4 32.♖e3 ♖e5 After 32...♘xf6 33.♖g3 ♕h5 34.♘g7 ♕g6 35.♘xe6 fxe6 36.♕xc4 is good or 32...♖xf6 33.♖xe4 ♕h5 34.♖xe8 ♖xe8 35.♘g7+ ♕g6 36.♕xg6+ fxg6 37.♘xe8 ♖e6 38.♖f7+ ♔xh6 39.♘f6.

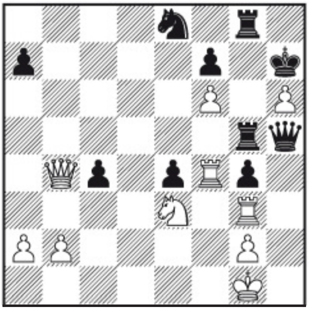
33.♖g3 ♕h5 34.♕d2 34.♕xc4.

34...g4 35.♘e3



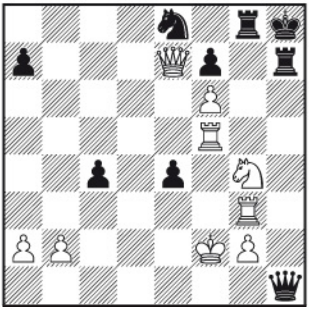
35.♕f4 is also playable.

35...♖g8 36.♖f4 ♖eg5 37.♕xb4



37...♖g6 38.♕e7 ♖xh6 39.♖f5 ♕h1+ 40.♔f2 ♔h8 Best is 40...♕h4 41.♕xf7+ ♔h8 42.♕xa7 ♖xf6 43.♕e7 ♖xf5+ 44.♘xf5 ♕xe7 45.♘xe7 ♖g5.

41.♘xg4 ♖h7



Now White has a winning combination but 41...♕h4 42.♕e5 is very difficult for Black.

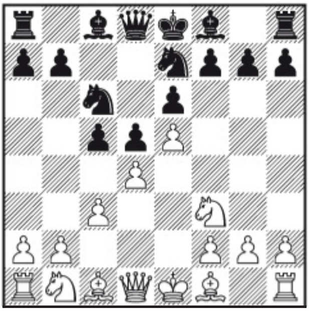
42.♖g5 ♖xg5 43.♕xe8+ ♖g8 44.♕xg8+ After Black recaptures the White queen, the double check mates.

1-0

Zhou Y – Keith **Arkell**

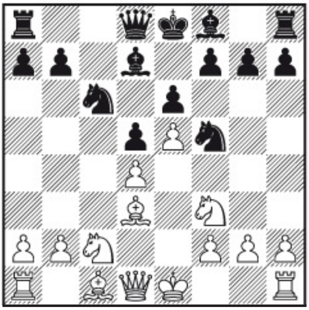
4NCL 2024–25 England ENG (6.67)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♘c6 5.♘f3 ♘ge7

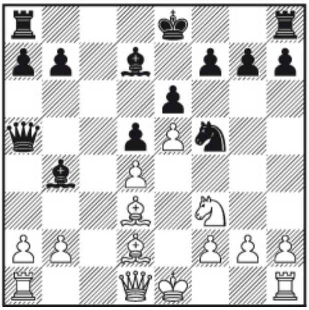


6.♘a3 cxd4 7.cxd4 ♘f5 8.♘c2 ♗d7 Also playable is 8...♕b6 9.g4 ♘fe7 10.♗d3 h5.

9.♗d3



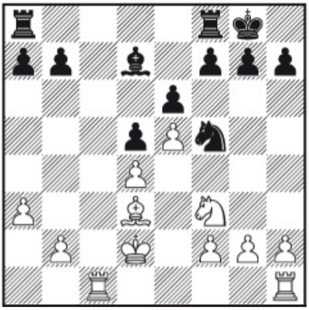
9...♘b4 10.♘xb4 ♗xb4+ 11.♗d2 ♕a5



This line often leads to an ending.

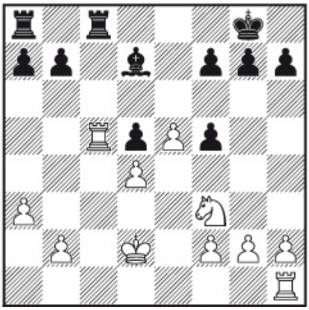
12.♖c1 0-0 Perhaps best is 12...♗xd2+ 13.♕xd2 ♕xd2+ 14.♔xd2 ♘e7.

13.a3 ♗xd2+ 14.♕xd2 ♕xd2+ 15.♔xd2



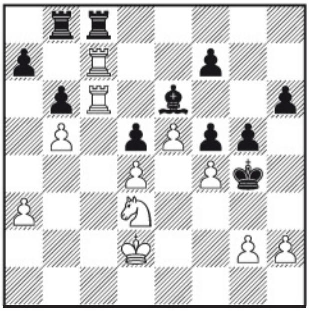
White has a slight edge now as his knight is better than the Black bishop.

15...♖fc8 16.♗xf5 exf5 17.♖c5



17...♗e6 18.♖hc1 h6 19.♖c7 ♖ab8 20.♘e1 g5 21.f4 ♔h7 If 21...gxf4 22.♘d3.

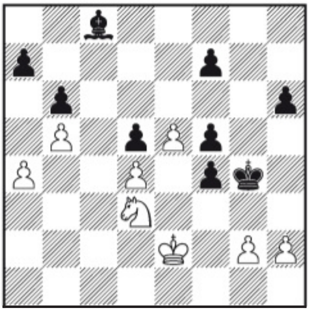
22.♖1c5 b6 23.♖5c6 ♔g6 24.♘d3 ♔h5 25.b4 ♔g4 26.b5



White threatens to take on a7 so Black exchanges rooks.

26...♖xc7 27.♖xc7 ♖a8 28.a4 gxf4 If 28... a6 29.a5 bxa5 30.b6.

29.♔e2 ♖c8 30.♖xc8 ♗xc8

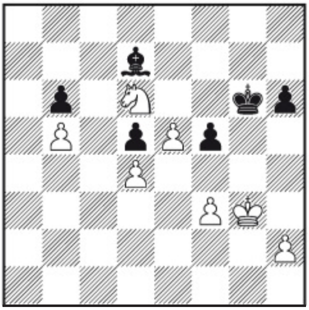


Now the White knight is able to get at the Black pawns.

31.♘b4 ♗b7 32.♘c6 a6 33.♘d8 ♗c8 34.♘xf7 axb5 35.axb5 ♗d7 36.♔f2 Good is 36.♘xh6+ ♔h5 37.♘g8 ♗xb5+ 38.♔f3 ♔g6 39.♔xf4 ♔f7 40.♘f6 ♗c6 41.♔xf5 b5 42.e6+ ♔e7 43.♔e5 b4 44.♘g8+ ♔f8 45.♔d6 ♘xg8 46.♔xc6 b3 47.e7+ ♔f7 48.♔d7 b2 49.e8♕+ winning.

36...f3 If 36...♗xb5 37.e6 ♗e8 38.♘d6 ♗g6 39.e7 ♔g5 40.e8♕ ♗xe8 41.♘xe8 b5 42.♘c7 b4 43.♘xd5 b3 44.♘c3 winning.

37.gxf3+ ♔h5 38.♔g3 ♔g6 39.♘d6



39...♔g5 40.♘f7+ ♔g6 41.♘d6 ♔g5 42.h4+ ♔g6 After 42...♔h5 43.♔f4 ♔xh4 44.♘xf5+ ♔h5 45.e6 ♗xb5 46.♔e5 ♔g6 47.♘d6 ♗a4 48.e7 h5 49.f4 h4 50.f5+ ♔g5 51.f6 winning.

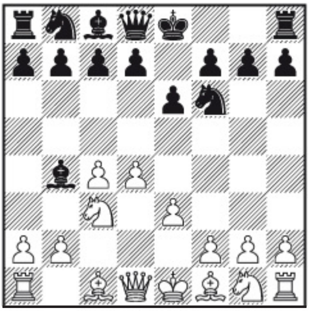
43.♔f4 h5 44.e6 ♗xe6 45.♔e5 ♗d7 46.f4 ♔g7 47.♘xf5+ ♔f7 48.♘d6+

1-0

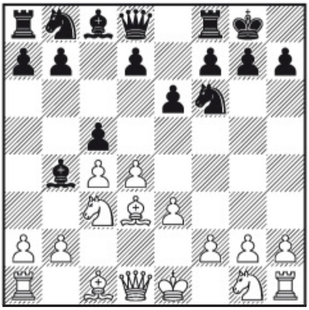
Mircea **Parligras** - James **Moreby**

4NCL 2024–25 England ENG (9.24)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 ♗e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e3

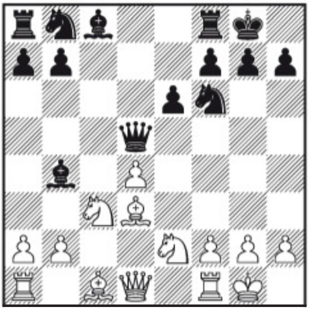


4...0-0 5.♗d3 c5



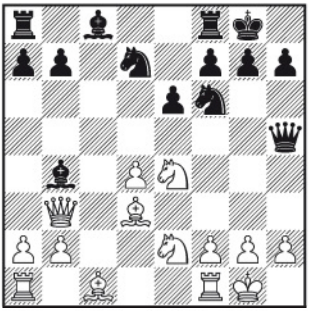
6.♘ge2 6.♘f3 is another good line.

6...cxd4 7.exd4 d5 8.cxd5 ♕xd5 9.0-0



So Black has to decide where to place the queen, he chooses to inhibit any play by White on the kingside.

9...♕h5 10.♘e4 ♘bd7 11.♕b3



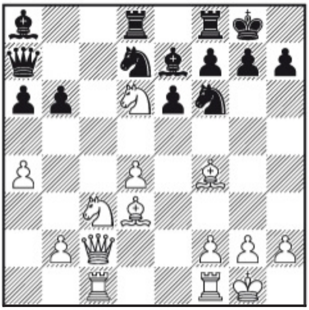
11...♕a5 12.♗f4 ♕b6 13.♘c3 13.♘d6 ♗xd6 14.♕xb6 ♘xb6 15.♗xd6 ♖d8 16.♗c7 ♖e8 with a slight edge for White.

13...a6 14.♖ac1 ♗e7 15.♕c2 15.♕xb6 ♘xb6 16.♗c7 ♘bd5 17.♘xd5 ♘xd5 18.♗e4 is equal.

15...♕a7 16.a4 Preventing b5 is logical.

16...b6 17.♘g3 ♗b7 18.♘ge4 18.♕e2 is the alternative.

18...♖ad8 19.♘d6 ♗a8



A strong retreat leaving the White knight on d6 without an immediate plan so White pulls back

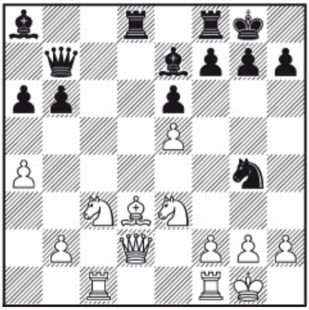
20.c4 ♘b8 Black plays against the White pawn on d4.

21.♗e5 ♘c6 22.♕d2 Indirect defence of d4 but Black is well prepared now to attack.

22...♕b7 A strong move if 22...♘xd4 23.♗xd4 ♖xd4 24.♗xh7+ ♘xh7 25.♕xd4.

23.♘e3 After 23.f3 ♘xd4 24.♗xd4 ♖xd4 25.♗xh7+ ♘xh7 26.♕xd4 ♗c5 wins the queen.

23...♘xe5 24.dxe5 ♘g4



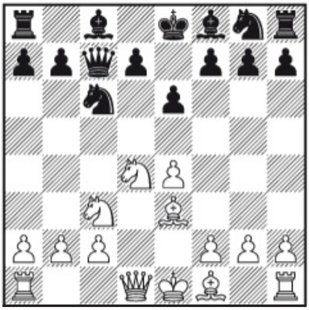
25.♘cd1 ♘xe5 26.♖c3 ♘f3+

0-1

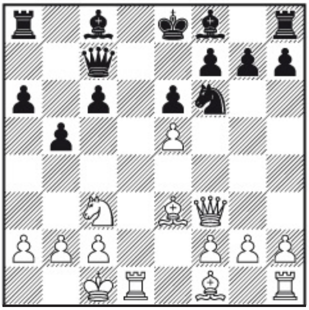
L Varnam – K Toma

4NCL 2024–25 England ENG (10.18)

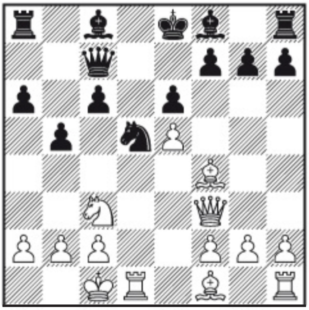
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘c3 ♕c7 6.♗e3



6...a6 7.♕f3 ♘f6 8.0-0-0 b5 9.♘xc6 dxc6 10.e5

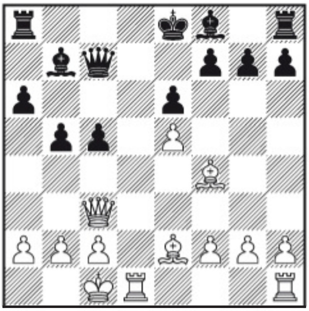


10...♘d5 11.♗f4



11...♘xc3 11...f5 is worth consideration.

12.♕xc3 ♗b7 13.♗e2 c5



Black is almost equal now.

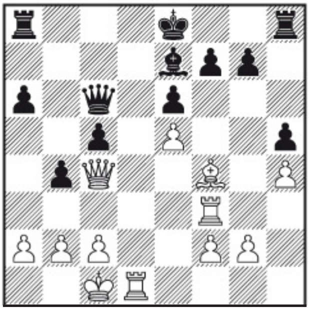
14.♗f3 14.♕g3 14.♕g3 is more challenging for Black.

14...b4 15.♕c4 15.♕b3 is logical.

15...♗e7 15...♗xf3 16.gxf3 is also good.

16.♖d3 h5 17.h4 17.♖hd1 is logical.

17...♗xf3 18.♖xf3 ♕c6 19.♖d1

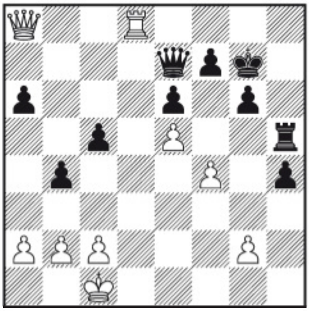


19...♖d8 20.♖xd8+ ♗xd8 21.♖d3 ♗xh4 22.♗e3 ♗e7 23.f3 h4 23...♕b5 24.♕e4 0-0 25.b3 ♖c8 is good.

24.♕g4 g6 25.♗g5 ♕c7 26.f4 ♖h5 26...c4 27.♖d4 c3 is also good.

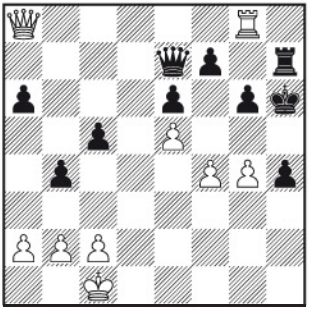
27.♗xe7 ♕xe7 The losing mistake. 27...♔xe7 is better for Black.

28.♕f3 ♔f8 29.♕a8+ ♔g7 30.♖d8



30...♖h7 After 30...f6 31.♕c8 threatening ♖d7 wins.

31.♖g8+ ♔h6 32.g4



With the deadly threat of g5+ followed by ♕f3 and if 32..h3 33 ♕f3 wins. If Black takes en passant then ♕h1 is mate!

1-0

PROBLEM WORLD

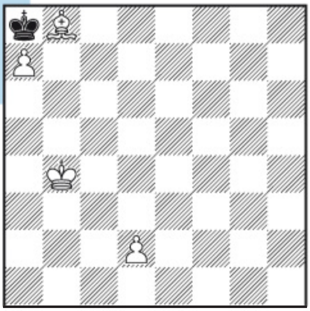
by Christopher Jones

cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk

Grandmaster of Chess Composition

Solutions are given on page 446

1

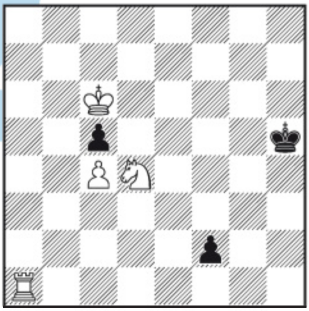


Paul Michelet (London)

Mate in 7

ORIGINAL

2

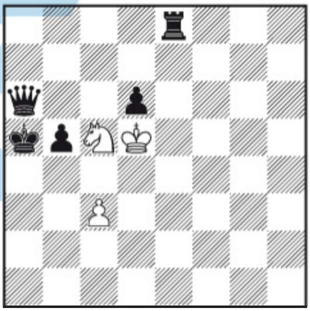


Stanislav Hudak (Slovakia)

Helpmate in 3 - 2 solutions

ORIGINAL

3

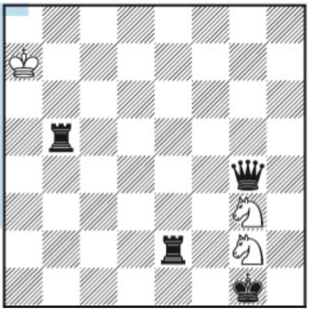


Christopher Jones (Bristol)

Helpmate in 3 (b)Pd6>e5

ORIGINAL

4



Ljubomir Ugren (Slovenia)

Helpmate in 5 (b)Kg1>h3

ORIGINAL

Apologies – **Problem 2 in the June issue should have been captioned as a mate in 7 (not a mate in 3)!**

Christopher Jones

QUOTES AND QUERIES

MINIATURES OR – HOW THINGS CAN GO WRONG QUICKLY!

By Alan Smith

Miniature chess games are instructive. The loser's play shows how not to play chess. The following amusing 12 mover shows white launching a premature attack and being called to account.

Miniature chess games are more than just curiosities—they distil the essence of tactics, strategy, and error into a handful of moves. This selection brings together short, sharp encounters from across chess history, where instructive mistakes meet decisive play. From the premature aggression of von Carnap punished by Harrwitz, to Henry Buckle's elegant dismantling of Captain Kennedy, and a striking Grand Prix Attack from wartime Netherlands, these games span eras but share a common theme: how quickly things can go wrong—or right—on the chessboard. Annotated and contextualised with period insight, they offer both a glimpse into the past and enduring lessons for the present.

6295

von Carnap - Daniel **Harrwitz**

George and Vulture, London 1847

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♗c4 ♗c5 5.c3 d3 Harrwitz tried this in two games with Staunton the previous year.

6.♘g5? White tries for too much,6.b4 is better.

6...♘h6 7.♘xf7?? He has only calculated 7...♘xf7 8.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 9.♕h5+, but black has better.

7...♕f6! 8.♕h5 Trying to hold his position together, Harrwitz announced mate in five.

8...♕xf2+ 9.♕d1 ♕c2+ 10.♔e1 ♕xc1+ 11.♕d1 ♕e3+ 12.♔f1 ♕f2#

Bell's Life in London, 21st February 1847

6296 Henry Thomas Buckle (1821- 1862) was famous as a historian who also played chess to 2500 standard. He won matches versus Kieseritzky and Lowenthal and also defeated Anderssen and Harrwitz. Buckle also won the first chess tournament held at the Divan in 1848, defeating Elijah Williams en route to the three-player final. Less than a hundred of his games on equal terms survive, as he played little after 1851. Here is one of his last games.

Henry **Buckle** – Captain Hugh Alexander **Kennedy**

1861

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.c3 f5 This is risky, but sets white problems. Players who want to unbalance the position might also try the piece sacrifice 3...♘f6 4.d4 ♘xe4 5.d5 ♗c5!?

4.d4 fxe4 4...d6.

5.♘xe5 ♘f6 6.♗b5 ♗d6 6...a6 was Staunton - Harrwitz 1846, whch continued 7.♗xc6 bxc6 8.♗g5 ♖b8 9.b4

7.♗f4! a6 8.♗a4 ♗xe5 9.dxe5 ♘g8 10.♕h5+ g6 11.♕e2 ♕e7 12.♘d2 ♘xe5 13.♘xe4 ♘b6 14.♗g5 ♕e6 15.♗b3 d5 16.♗xd5 ♕e5 17.♗xc6+ ♔f8 18.0–0–0 ♗f5 18...bxc6 19.♖d8+ ♔f7 20.f4 ♕e6 21.♗h6.

19.Rd5 This is good enough to reach a winning endgame, but 19.f4! ♕a5 20.♗d5! is immediately decisive.

19...♕e6 20.♖hd1 bxc6 21.♖d8+ ♖xd8 22.♖xd8+ ♔g7 23.♘g3 ♕xe2 24.♘xe2 a6 25.♗f4 ♘e7 26.♖xh8 ♔xh8 27.♗xc7...

1–0

Bath Herald, 22nd August 1863

Buckle's *History of Civilization in England*, volume 1 was published in two volumes, the first in 1857.

6297 The Grand Prix Attack avoids the mainlines of the open Sicilian, without relinquishing the chance to attack. Interested students should examine Short - Gelfand match game 3, Brussels 1992. Black avoided the pitfalls that have led to many quick white wins, but was overcome by a knight regrouping and an exchange sacrifice.

A. **van der Heyden** - Eduard **Spanjaard**

Netherlands, 1941

1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.f4 g6 4.♘f3 ♗g7 5.♗c4 5.♗b5 was played successfully by George Walcott at New York 1911, the Dutch player Alex Vinken was also a fan. White also has the option of 5.♗e2 or 5.g3.

5...d6 5...e6 is more logical, white can then try 6.e5 d5 7.exd6 ♕xd6 8.♘e4.

6.d3 e6 7.0–0 ♘ge7 8.♕e1 0–0 9.♗b3 a6 9...♘a5 10.♗e3 b6 is more testing as demonstrated by Tiviakov - Kasparov Wijk aan Zee 2001.

10.♘e2 b5 10…♘e5.

11.c3 ♗b7 12.♘g5 ♕d7 13.♗e3 ♖ac8 14.♕h4 h6 15.♘f3 ♘a5 16.f5 A thematic break.

16...♘xb3? 16...exf5 is better as the column suggests, if 17.♗xh6 black can defend with 17...♘xb3 18.axb3 f6 19.♘f4 ♖f7 when white's attack is notional.

17.f6! g5 18.♗xg5 ♘g6 19.♕h5 ♗h8 20.axb3 c4 21.♘f4 ♘xf4 22.♗xf4 cxd3 23.♗h6 ♗xe4 24.♘h4 ♕a7+ 25.♔h1 ♕b7 26.♕g5+ ♔h7 27.♗g7

1–0

de Noord Ooster, 2nd August 1941

This match game from 1853 reaches a similar position.

Robert **Brien - Forshall**

mg Oxford, 1852

1.e4 c5 2.♗c4 This may look strange to modern players, but Anderssen won three games at London 1851 with the move. Two of those were in the final match against Marmaduke Wyvill.

2...♘c6 2...e6 is more logical, the bishop bites on granite.

3.♘c3 g6 4.d3 ♗g7 5.f4 e6 6.♘f3 ♘ge7 7.0–0 0–0 8.♕e1 d5 9.♗b3 ♘d4 9...♘a5.

10.♘xd4 cxd4 11.♘d1 dxe4 12.dxe4 13.♗d2 ♕b6 14.♗a5 ♕a6 15.♗b4 ♖fe8 16.♗xe7 ♖xe7 17.♕h4 ♖ee8 18.♖f3 ♗c6 19.♘f2 ♕e2 20.♘d3 ♕xe4 20...♗xe4 is the stronger capture, as Staunton pointed out: 21.♖e1 ♗xf3 22.♖xe2 ♗xe2 or 21.♖f2 ♕h5 22.♕xh5 gxh5, neither of which offers much joy for White. White can do better in the second line with 22.♕g3. Even so, black is a pawn to the good and has the bishop pair.

21.♖e1 ♕f5 22.♖h3 f6? 23.g4 ♕a5 24.♕xh7+ ♔f7 25.f5 gxf5 26.gxf5 ♗d5 27.♕g6+ ♔f8 28.♖h7 ♕c7 29.fxe6 ♗xb3 30.axb3 ♖e7 31.♖e2 ♖ae8 32.♖g2 ♔g8 33.♕h5

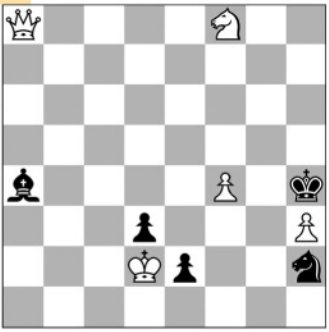
1–0

Illustrated London News, 4th June 1853

Endgame Studies

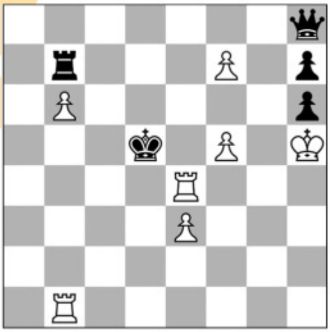
by Ian Watson
ian@irwatson.uk

1



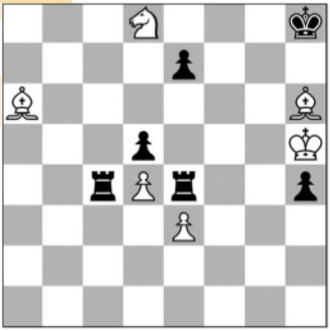
O. Pervakov
UAPA-21 2023
WIN

2



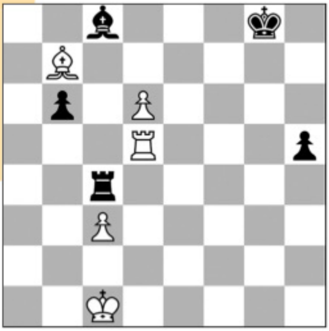
O. Pervakov
World Cup 2022
DRAW

3



O. Pervakov
Avni-70 2024
DRAW

4



O. Pervakov
The Macedonian Problemist 2023
WIN

THE STUDY WORLD CHAMPION

The results are in! The top three in the World Championship for study composing are - in no particular order - Michael Pasman, Steffen Nielsen, and Oleg Pervakov. And... the winner is... Oleg Pervakov. (Cue massive applause.)

The World Championship in Composing for Individuals is held every three years. Compositions that have been published in those three years are eligible to take part. There are sections for all the major types of chess problem, such as two-movers, helpmates, etc., and one of the sections is for endgame studies. In each section, the competitors' compositions are given scores and the scores of four compositions of each entrant are added up; the entrant with the highest overall total is declared the World Champion for that type of composition. It was a tight result in the study section, Pervakov coming narrowly ahead of Nielsen and Pasman in second and third places.

Somewhat like the over-the-board World Championship, not everyone chooses to take part, and some of the non-entrants may be worthy of such a title - Magnus Carlsen no longer competes in the OTB event but is still the strongest player. However, like in OTB chess, the field in the WCCI does include a good proportion of the best composers.

This month, we have Pervakov's four WCCI studies; we'll look at the solutions to two of them, and then you can try your solving skills on the other two. The first study (the one with White QN) has the solution **1.♘g6+ ♔g3 2.♘h4 ♔xh4 3.♔e1 ♗c6 4.♕h8+ ♔g3 5.♕g7+ ♔xh3 6.♕h6/7+ ♔g3 7.♕g6+ ♔h4 8.♕xc6 ♘f3+ 9.♕xf3 d2+ 10.♔f2 e1♕+ 11.♔g2 ♗e2+ 12.♕xe2 d1♕ 13.♕e7+ ♔h5 14.♕g5** mate. The theme is annihilation (active and passive), realised twice.

I can't give all the sidelines to any of these four studies, but I'll give some key ones: there is a logical try **1.♔e1? ♔g3**, and the f8 knight blocks White's queen checks, so White's first task is to dispose of it. **1.♕d8+? ♔g3 2.♕xd3+ ♘f3+ 3.♔xe2 ♗b5**. **1.♕g2? ♘f1+ 2.♔xd3 e1♘+**. There's another logical try in the solution line: **4.♕xc6? ♘f3+ 5.♕xf3 d2+ 6.♔f2 e1♕+ 7.♔g2 d1♕**, and the **h3** pawn prevents White from mating, so in the main line, White plays to get rid of this too.

The second study (White RR) has this solution **1.♖e8 ♕g7 2.♖d1+ ♔c6 3.♖c8+ ♖c7 4.♖xc7+ ♔xb6 5.♖g1 ♕xg1 6.♖b7+ ♔xb7 7.♔xh6 ♕h2+ 8.♔g7 ♕e5+ 9.♔g8 ♕g3+ 10.♔h8 ♕b8+ 11.♔g7 ♕c7 12.f6 ♔c6 13.e4 ♔d6 14.♔g8 ♕c4 15.♔g7 ♕c7 16.♔g8** with a positional draw.

The key sidelines are: **1...♕f6 2.♖d1+ ♔c4 3.♖c8+ ♔b3 4.♖d3+ ♔a4 5.♖a3+ ♔b5 6.♖b3+** draws. In the main line: **3...♔xb6 4.♖b1+ ♔a7 5.♖a1+ ♕xa1 6.f8♕ ♕h1+ 7.♔g4 ♕e4+ 8.♔h5 ♕h1+ 9.♔g4 ♕g2+ 10.♔f4** draws. There is a logical try: 6.♔xh6? ♕h2+ 7.♔g7 ♕xc7 8.f6 ♔c5 9.e4 ♔d4 10.♔g8 ♕g3+ 11.♔h8 ♕b8+ 12.♔g7 ♔e5 13.f8♕ ♕xf8+ 14.♔xf8 ♔xf6 wins. In the main line, Black plays ...♕h2+ to keep the e3 pawn on the board (7...♕xe3+ 8.♔xh7 is drawing). In a sort of echo, White avoids taking the h7 pawn on move nine. There's a thematic try on move 12: 12.♔g8+? ♕c4 13.e4 h5 14.♔g7 ♕c7 15.♔g8 ♕g3+ 16.♔h7 ♕b8 17.♔g7 h4 18.f8♕ **♕xf8+ 19.♔xf8 h3 20.f6 h2 21.f7 h1♕** wins. There's also a logical try on move 13: 13.♔g8? ♕g3+ 14.♔h8 ♕d6 15.♔g7 ♕d7 16.e4 ♔d6 17.♔g8 ♕g4+ 18.♔h8 ♕c8+ 19.♔g7 ♔e6 20.f8♕ ♕xf8+ 21.♔xf8 ♔xf6 wins.

Now over to you. The third is about forks and fortresses. The last about tempo-winning, switchback, and stalemate.

The solutions are on page 447.

SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS (See page 441)

This month's originals

What you often find in chess problems is that it looks as though White can use prosaic means - the sort of strong moves that would be first candidate moves in a game - but it turns out that these methods don't work and something more unusual is required. Well, that isn't quite the case in this month's starter problem. A glaringly obvious line of play does lead to mate within the stipulated seven moves. However, you have to prove mate against Black's best defence, and if you find that defence then you will find the sort of unexpected continuation cherished by problem fans. After that it's a diet of helpmates - remember that in each case Black starts, initiating a collaborative sequence that ends with his being mated. In Stanislav's problem there are two ways to do this from the diagram position, in the other two the stipulated shift from the diagram position gives you a wholly new move sequence to find.

Find Black's best defence

As might be expected, the seven-mover begins with 1.d4 ♔b7 2.d5. At this point, retreats by the black king fail in prosaic fashion, e.g., 2…♔c8 3.a8=♕ ♔d7 4.♕b7+ (not 4.♕c6+), etc. And play after 2…♔a6 is similarly straightforward. But what about 2…♔b6? Now 3.a8=♕ is stalemate. There is only one way now to mate in the stipulated number of moves, and that is 3.a8=♗! The same surprising motif recurs after the further moves 3…♔a6 4.d6 ♔b6 5.d7 ♔a6. Again, it is the case that a promotion to queen is a stalemate. So it has to be 6.d8=♖!, and after 6…♔b6 promotion at d8 to queen (or bishop) is mate. It is very pleasing to find a requirement for three different types of promotion in so apparently humdrum a five-man position.

This time it's Black (sub-)promoting…

…and again those promotions are to bishop and to rook. In Stanislav's helpmate, the solutions run: 1.♔h4 ♖g1 2.f1=♗ ♖g5 3.♗h3 ♘f3# and 1.f1=♖ ♘f3 2.♖g1 ♘e5 3.♖g5 ♖h1#. The white rook and knight alternate mating/guarding roles, and it's pleasing that both the white and black rooks are made to go to g1 and then g5. Both mates are model. Some purists might deprecate the recurrence of the move …♘f3, although of course the move serves different purposes in the two solutions.

All change…

Very different lines of play occur in the second three-move helpmate, with changed roles for all participants other than the static black king. In the diagram position, the solution is: 1.♕c6+ ♔xc6 2.♖e4 ♔b7 3.♖a4 ♘b3#. In Part (b) (with the d6 black pawn now on e5), the black rook must gain access to the fourth rank by a less obvious route, benefiting from a knight sacrifice by White — 1.♖b8 ♘a4 2.bxa4 ♔c5 — and must also be sacrificed — 3.♖b4 cxb4#.

'The Ugren challenge'…

…is becoming a regular feature of this column! Readers will know to expect a challenging but satisfying solving challenge from our highly esteemed regular contributor. A bonus this time is that each of the two mating sequences ends with an ideal mate - that is, a model mate (each potential flight square of the black king either blocked or uniquely guarded by one white man) which involves every unit remaining on the board. Thus, in the diagram position we have 1.♔f2 ♔a6 2.♔f3 ♔xb5 3.♕f5+ ♔c4 4.♖e5 ♘f1 5.♔e4 ♘d2#; and then, in (b), with the black king transplanted to h3, we have: 1.♖f5 ♔b6 2.♖f3 ♔c5 3.♕g5+ ♔d4 4.♔g3 ♘e3+ 5.♔f4 ♘xe2#. "All change" applies also to this helpmate - it's very neatly engineered that the two white king treks are on different diagonals, and that the black rooks alternate active guarding duties and passive 'sacrificial lamb' roles.

SOLUTIONS TO ENDGAMES (See page 444)

Pervakov - White BBN

1.♘f7+ ♔g8 2.♘d6 exd6 3.♗b7 ♔h7 4.♗xd5 ♖c5 5.♗g5 ♖e5 6.dxe5 ♖xd5 7.♔xh4 ♔g6 8.♔g4 with two lines:

– **8...dxe5 9.♗h4 ♖d3 10.♗f2 ♔f6 11.e4** with a fortress draw.

– **8...♖xe5 9.♗f4 ♖e6 10.♔f3 d5 11.♔e2 ♔f5 12.♔d3** also a fortress draw.

Notice the fork by a knight, the fork by a bishop, and the self-fork by a pawn.

1.♗b7? ♖b4 2.♗c6 ♖b6 3.♗d7 ♔g8 4.♗f4 ♖xf4 5.exf4 ♖d6 6.♔xh4 ♖xd7 7.♘e6 ♔f7 8.f5 ♖d6 wins. In the main line: **5...♖xd4 6.♗e4+ ♖xe4** stalemate.

Pervakov - White BR

1.♗a6 ♖xc3+ 2.♔d2 ♖c6 3.♗b7 ♖c4 4.♔d3 ♖c1 5.♗xc8 ♖xc8 6.d7 ♖d8 7.♔c4 ♔f7 8.♔b5 ♔e6 9.♔c6 h4 10.♖d4 h3 11.♖e4+ ♔f5 12.♖h4 wins. White needs to bring his king up before exchanging on c8, so he manoeuvres to win tempo. Notice the 'switchback' of the bishop.

There is a logical try: 2.♔b2? ♖c6 3.♗b7 ♖c4 4.♔b3 b5 5.♗xc8 ♖xc8 6.d7 ♖d8 7.♔b4 ♔f7 8.♔xb5 ♔e6 9.♔c6 h4 10.♖d4 ♖xd7 11.♖xd7 ♔f5 12.♖h7 ♔g4 13.♔d5 h3 14.♔e4 ♔g3 15.♔e3 ♔g2 16.♖g7+ ♔f1 17.♖h7 ♔g2 18.♔e2 h2 19.♖g7+ ♔h1 and there will be stalemate (which there wouldn't be if Black still had a b-pawn), so later in the main line **10...♖xd7 11.♖xd7** will not result in stalemate. In the main line: **4...b5 5.♖xb5 ♖c1 6.♔d2**, with domination of the Black rook.

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